



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,

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and Prayer for Reconciliation commences on 20 May and concludes 27 May, the 40th Anniversary of the 1967 referendum.

The work for national reconciliation and for dignity and justice for our Indigenous sisters and brothers continues. It has been supported greatly by the Statement of the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference for Social Justice Sunday last September and by the momentous *Dreaming from the Heart* celebrations in Alice Springs, which occurred a month later.

The Bishops echoed the call of Pope John Paul II for governments and all people "to pursue with still greater energy programs to improve the conditions and the standard of living of indigenous groups in the vital areas of health, education, employment and housing". The Bishops spoke to all people when they said, "the challenge is now ours to move closer to achieving a new reconciliation" (refer: <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au>)

In his letter to Cardinal Cassidy on the twentieth anniversary of Pope John Paul II's visit to Alice Springs, the Holy Father Pope Benedict made a direct plea to the Australian community:

'Much has been achieved along the path of racial reconciliation yet there is still much to be accomplished. No one can exempt themselves from this process. While no culture may use past hurt as an excuse to avoid facing the difficulties in meeting the contemporary social needs of its own people, it is also the case that only through the readiness to accept historical truth can a sound understanding of contemporary reality be reached and the vision of a harmonious future espoused.

I therefore again encourage all Australians to address with compassion and determination the deep underlying causes of the plight which still afflicts so many Aboriginal citizens. Commitment to truth opens the way to lasting reconciliation through the healing process of asking for forgiveness and granting forgiveness - two indispensable elements for peace.'

(http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/letters/2006/documents/hf_ben-xvi_let_20060922_card-cassidy_en.html)

It is with these words in mind that we can consider the following important matters:

Developments concerning 'Stolen Wages'

Last December, a Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee Inquiry into Stolen Wages handed down its report, titled *Unfinished Business: Indigenous stolen wages*. The Inquiry concerned the practice of withholding part or all of the wages of Indigenous people who worked for or under the control of federal and at least some state governments during the 19th and 20th centuries. The report can be accessed at

http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/legcon_ctte/stolen_wages/report/index.htm.

The Committee's basic recommendation was that the issue of stolen wages must be resolved justly and promptly. Many potential claimants are old or ill. Further research and consultation are needed, but by themselves will not resolve the stolen wages issue.

The committee recommends that all governments that have a liability should, after consultation with the relevant Indigenous people, set up adequate compensation arrangements. Where records are incomplete, compensation schemes should allow claims based on oral and other evidence. In addition, an important part of redressing the stolen wages issue is the opportunity for Indigenous people to tell their stories, 'so that the wider community becomes aware of this part of Australian history'.

The committee believes a case can be made that governments are legally responsible for repayment or compensation to those who suffered under these regimes, and in fact several such cases have been mounted. However, litigation is not the best solution: it is not in the best interests of governments or claimants, and compensation would probably not be available to people whose records have been lost or destroyed.

Governments must take initiative: there is enough evidence to justify their conducting preliminary research to determine whether there are issues to be addressed and how to address them.

Many Indigenous people apparently still do not know that they have been denied wages and welfare entitlements. The committee also believes that the federal and state governments have a responsibility allow people access to archives to research this issue and should fund an education and awareness campaign in relation to this matter.

For further information and to stay up to date on this important issue, visit:

http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/library/subject_guides_bibliographies/stolen_wages;

http://antarqld.org.au/05_involved/facts.html;

http://www.acsjc.org.au/content/publications/positionpapers/2006_1_23stolen_wages_-_an_opportunity_for_justice.html

“40 Days of Action for 40 Years of Inaction”

As part of its ‘Make Indigenous Poverty History’ campaign, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission (NATSIEC) of the National Council of Churches has launched its ‘40 Days of Action’ campaign, which is related to the forthcoming anniversary of the 1967 referendum (celebrated on Pentecost Sunday). NATSIEC’s campaign material says:

‘40 years ago, in 1967, 90.77 % of the Australian population voted in a referendum which finally made Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people citizens of their own country. The referendum, which amended the Constitution, allowed the Federal Government to make national laws in relation to Aboriginal people; previously laws were only made by the States. In addition, Aborigines were counted in the census, which also gave them citizenship rights such as the vote and freedom of movement.

‘40 years later we can see there have been many changes and achievements for Indigenous people, but sadly the condition that many Aboriginals still live in is not something to celebrate. Life expectancy is 17 years less than other citizens of Australia; traditional lands, languages and cultural practices remain under threat and Indigenous participation in areas such as education and the labour force remain lower than for other Australians.

‘40 years ago the nation united and stood up for Aborigines; nothing less than that level of commitment today will end Indigenous Poverty. Join us and take 40 days of action for 40 years of inaction and help to Make Indigenous Poverty History today.’

Further information about this important campaign is available at:

http://www.ncca.org.au/natsiec/indigenous_poverty/action/40_days_of_action

This webpage lists the days of action and provides action sheets that can be downloaded for each of the days listed.

Indigenous Health – Contacting Politicians and ‘Close the Gap’ pledge

Oxfam is coordinating two campaigns calling for action on Indigenous health. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples suffer a much higher incidence of most chronic diseases, including kidney and heart disease, and die on average 17 years younger than other Australians. ‘Yet Indigenous Australians receive less per person in government health funding than non-Indigenous Australians,’ Oxfam says.

Oxfam’s first campaign is a message to the federal ALP leadership, who this month will be debating party policy for the upcoming election. Oxfam is urging people to strengthen the voice of Indigenous Australia by sending a message to the ALP leadership. To join the campaign, go to http://www.oxfam.org.au/campaigns/indigenous/write_to_alp_letter.php.

Oxfam is also running the ‘Close the Gap’ campaign, collecting signatures demanding Indigenous health equality within a generation. The call is for Australian governments to take action to achieve health equality for Indigenous Australians within 25 years through: increasing annual Indigenous health funding by \$450 million; increasing Indigenous involvement in the delivery of health services; and addressing critical social issues such as housing, education and self-determination. Further information can be found at: <http://www.oxfam.org.au/campaigns/indigenous/action.php>.

The ACSJC and Secretariat wish you the blessings of Holy Week and the joy, peace and new life of Easter.

John Ferguson

National Executive Officer

CURRENT ISSUES/RESOURCES

BISHOP SAUNDERS CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF DAVID HICKS

The Chairman of the ACSJC, Bishop Christopher Saunders, called for the immediate release of Australian Guantanamo detainee David Hicks, even though Mr Hicks has pleaded guilty to one charge of providing material support for terrorism. 'David Hicks has been detained for more than five years, including long periods of solitary confinement. Only one charge has now been brought against Mr Hicks, and there are grave concerns as to its legality and that of the military commission process. The length and severity of his detention, and his dignity as a human being, make it imperative to end his detention now,' Bishop Saunders said.

The full text of Bishop Saunders's statement is available at:

http://www.acsjc.org.au/content/media_releases/2007_03_27_1174992371.html.

The Statement of the Australian Catholic Bishops on 12 January 2007 can be found at:

<http://www.acbc.catholic.org.au/bishops/confpres/200612011203.htm>

'LEGAL MUDDLING' - FR FRANK BRENNAN ON THE PACIFIC SOLUTION

Fr Frank Brennan SJ says in a recent article: 'Kevin Andrews, the new Minister for Immigration, has sounded muddled in his statements defending the government's decision to send 83 Sri Lankan asylum seekers to Nauru for processing. It is not all his fault. Even when he gets up to speed in the portfolio, there will still be much confusing complexity.' The 'Pacific solution' is now incoherent, Fr Brennan says: 'The morphed, useless, expensive and discredited Pacific Solution now amounts to a policy aimed at keeping lawyers away from asylum seekers and immunising public servants from scrutiny by courts and tribunals.' The full text of his article is at <http://www.cathnews.com/news/703/doc/3obrennan.html>.

INDIGENOUS HEALTH: A NEW BOOK

Allen and Unwin have just published 'Social Determinants of Indigenous Health', edited by Bronwyn Carson, Terry Dunbar, Richard D. Chenhall and Ross Bailie. The publishers describe it as 'A systematic overview of the impact of social and political factors on the health of Australia's Indigenous population. Australia's Aboriginal and Islander groups suffer Fourth World standards

of health: this book explains the causes for such poor health outcomes and approaches behind health programs which have been successful.' The book's recommended retail price is \$49.95; its ISBN is 9781741751420.

For more information, go to

<http://www.allenandunwin.com/Shopping/ProductDetails.aspx?ISBN=9781741751420>. A review of the book is at <http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=5643>.

REFUGEE COUNCIL BLASTS DENIAL OF LEGAL HELP TO SRI LANKANS

In a media release on 28 March, the Refugee Council of Australia said 'The Australian Government's failure to provide Sri Lankan asylum seekers on Nauru with access to adequate legal assistance could result in a breach of the Refugees Convention.' Council president John Gibson said the denial of legal assistance would increase the chance of people being returned to danger. The council points out that last year, the Government was prepared to provide to those being processed on Nauru similar support to that available to protection visa applicants in detention in Australia 'There is no reason whatsoever that this should not be provided now, particularly because of the strong *prima facie* nature of the claims of these young Sri Lankan asylum applicants,' Mr Gibson said. The Council's website is <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/>.

PETITION REGARDING CHRISTMAS ISLAND

Mons. John Murphy of the Australian Catholic and Migrant Refugee Office is forwarding on a petition to federal parliamentarians calling for a stop to the construction of the Christmas Island Detention Centre. Signed forms can be sent to ACMRO at GPO Box 2720 Canberra ACT 2601 or directly to Refugee Action Collective Victoria, PO Box 578, Carlton South, Vic 3053 by May 31, 2007. ACMRO's website is www.acmro.catholic.org.au. The petition can be downloaded at <http://www.rac-vic.org/downloads/xmas-isl-dc-petition.pdf>.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND MENTAL HEALTH: EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

S A V E – Australia Inc in association with Melbourne Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office and other organisations will host the Fifth National Conference on Human Rights and Mental Health on Monday 25th and Tuesday 26th June 2007 in Melbourne. They are inviting interested organisations, groups, communities and individuals to send their expression of interest, either to join as a co-host, be a presenter, submit a paper, be a member of the organising committee or be a volunteer for the event. Expressions of Interest should be limited to one page outlining your suitability for the role and sent either by email to director@save.org.au or by mail to PO Box 20622 World Square 2002 on or before 23rd March 2007. For more information contact 0411 485 442 or 0412 013 053 or email gemma.hogan@save.org.au or alison.wilson@save.org.au.

POSITION VACANT – TRADE JUSTICE CAMPAIGNER

The Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network (AFTINET) seeks a campaigner to job share with the current campaigner for 2 days a week, conducting community education and advocacy about the social impact of trade agreements in Australia. The work will include assessing the impacts of the US-Australia Free Trade Agreement, and community education about proposed Free Trade Agreements with China and other countries, including APEC. The AFTINET website is

www.aftinet.org.au. The full-time salary is \$43,992 per year plus superannuation, paid on a pro-rata basis for two days per week.

For more information, contact Suzette Clark on 0419 695 841. Applications must address the selection criteria and must be delivered in hard copy or faxed by close of business on Wednesday, April 4. Email will not be accepted. Applications must be marked confidential and addressed to AFTINET Convenor, Level 3, 110 Kippax St, Surry Hills 2010, fax 02 9211 1407.

POVERTY STUDY – ‘DROPPING OFF THE EDGE’

Extreme social disadvantage in Australia is real and measurable. It is endemic to a small number of locations in this country, and it can be fixed, according to major new research to be released on Wednesday. ‘Dropping off the Edge: the distribution of disadvantage in Australia’ is the most comprehensive national study of its kind. The report, which is a joint project with Jesuit Social Services and Catholic Social Services Australia, is the third in a series of reports on the issue, written by Professor Tony Vinson from the University of Sydney. The report finds that just 1.7 per cent of postcodes and communities across Australia account for more than seven times their share of top rank positions on the major factors that cause intergenerational poverty. Maps and more information about how to order this publication are available at <http://www.australiandisadvantage.org.au>

CAMPAIGN – ‘MAKE INDIGENOUS POVERTY HISTORY’

The Make Indigenous Poverty History Campaign continues in 2007 with 40 Days of Action for 40 Years of Inaction. To see how you can be involved in this campaign of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission, and to obtain a wide range of resources, go to <http://www.ncca.org.au/natsiec/indigenouspoverty>

EDUCATION MODULE – ‘VOICES OF AUSTRALIA’

An educational tool to help combat racism and promote a culture of respect and equality among high school students around Australia has been launched by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC). The resource provides an invaluable tool to help students reap the rewards of living in a community where a quarter of the population has at least one parent born in another country. Copies of the module can be found at: <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/education/voices>

AMNESTY CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY

Amnesty International is part of the growing campaign for a world without executions. The death penalty violates one of the fundamental human rights – the right to life itself. To take a part in opposing the use of the death penalty, anywhere, for any reason, visit the Amnesty webpage on this campaign. Resources and helpful advice for action: http://www.amnesty.org.au/Act_now/campaigns/adp

DISCUSSION BOARD ON THE DEATH PENALTY

A discussion board exists for discussion of issues relating to the death penalty. The organisers say that ‘anti’ and ‘pro’ stances are welcome, and they debate the death penalty in the USA and world wide. The board is at <http://deathpenalty3.proboards103.com/index.cgi>.

REPORT ON ORGAN HARVESTING

The Coalition to Investigate the Persecution of Falun Gong (CIPFG) has called on federal Australian government and state governments to ban transplant tourism to China. The call was made in the context of a revised version of a report by Matas/Kilgour, which addresses the allegation that organs are harvested from Falun Gong practitioners who were killed in the process. The initial report was released July 6, 2006. The Revised Report into Allegations of Organ Harvesting maintains that it is true. For further information, visit:

http://www.erc.org.au/index.php?module=announce&ANN_user_op=view&ANN_id=39 or www.organharvestinvestigation.net.

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>)

DISCUSSION GUIDE – WORLD DAY OF PEACE MESSAGE 2007

On 1 January, the Holy Father delivered his World Day of Peace message. The theme of his message is *The Human Person, The Heart of Peace*. The ACSJC discussion guide consists of a brief overview of the Pope's message, some points for reflection and prayer. A helpful resource for group and classroom discussion. Download at: <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au>

ORDER NOW! 2007 SOCIAL JUSTICE DIARY

The 2007 Diary focuses on the theme of globalisation. It includes the dates of significant events, anniversaries and special days which celebrate particular aspects of social justice and highlight the theme, and provides a social justice program for the full year. Information and ideas for prayer and reflection are included. This is an essential resource for teachers and parishes. Cost: \$6.60 (inc. GST), plus postage. To download an order form, go to:

http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/content/publications/social_justice_calendar.html.

SERIES PAPER: CHOICE FOR WHOM? A DISCUSSION OF THE 2005 INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS LAWS

Catholic Social Justice Series No 58. At a time when Australia's industrial relations laws are undergoing radical change, Dr Tim Battin offers an analysis of the theory underpinning the 2005 industrial relations legislation, and measures that rationale against the precepts of Catholic social teaching. In addition to considering the legislation's moral implications, Dr Battin discusses some of its likely practical and social effects.

2006 SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY STATEMENT

This year's Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Social Justice Sunday Statement is entitled 'The Heart of Our Country - dignity and justice for our Indigenous sisters and brothers'. An order form for the Statement is available on the ACSJC website plus an electronic copy for download: <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au>. For associated resources visit the ACSJC website or call (02) 9956 581.

SERIES PAPER: CATHOLICS AND NATURE: TWO HUNDRED YEARS OF ENVIRONMENTAL ATTITUDES IN AUSTRALIA

Catholic Social Justice Series No 57. Concern for the environment has played a significant role in the Catholic Church in Australia since the 19th century. Fr Charles Rue SSC traces the development of environmental thought in Australian Catholicism.

(\$6.60 a copy, plus postage. Postage rates for Catholic Social Justice Series Papers: 1 copy \$1; 2-3 copies \$1.45; 4-5 copies \$2.45)

APRIL NOTICES

1 APRIL. PALM SUNDAY RALLY AND MARCH FOR PEACE (ALL STATES).

Information is available on rallies and marches in all the cities below at <http://www.nuclearfoolsday.org/>.

Adelaide: 1.00pm, Tardanyangga/Victoria Square, Adelaide. Information: <http://www.nuclearfoolsday.org/adelaide>.

Alice Springs: Uniting Church lawns, Todd Mall. Information: (04) 3882 1491. Information: <http://www.nuclearfoolsday.org/alice-springs>.

Brisbane: Queens Park, cnr Elizabeth and George Sts., Brisbane, 11.00 a.m. For details, contact (07) 3855 9497 or jshears@powerup.com.au.

Canberra: Rally 12.00 pm, ACT Legislative Assembly; march to Glebe Park, Civic. Information: <http://www.nuclearfoolsday.org/alice-springs>.

Darwin: Gather at Nightcliff Market (on the Oleander St side of the shops) 11.00 am. <http://www.nuclearfoolsday.org/darwin>.

Hobart: Gather at Franklin Square at 12.00 noon for a walk to Salamanca Lawns for a rally at 12.30 pm. Information: <http://www.tasmedia.org/node/1435>.

Kempsey: Peace Picnic at Riverside Park, 12.00 noon. BYO lunch. Information: <http://www.nuclearfoolsday.org/kempsey>.

Melbourne: gather at Treasury Gardens, 1.00 pm; parade to the Sidney Myer Music Bowl. Information: <http://www.nuclearfoolsday.org/melbourne>.

Newcastle: Meet at Civic Park (cnr Darby and King) 11.00 am, walk to Pacific Park (east end of Hunter St). Bring a picnic. Information: <http://nan.wikispaces.com/> or phone 0415 791 270.

Parramatta: 1pm: Palm Sunday Service and Multi-faith prayers for peace at Prince Alfred Park, Parramatta, then march to Parramatta Town Hall. Information: <http://www.nswpeace.org/>.

Perth: University of Western Australia's Oak Lawn, 10.00 am – 5.00 pm. Information: <http://www.nuclearfoolsday.org/perth>.

1 APRIL. CATALYST FOR RENEWAL PRESENTS 'A CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE OF ISLAM' (NSW). Participants: Fr Patrick McInerney (Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Dialogue), Fr Dan Madigan SJ (Islamic scholar), Geraldine Doogue and Peter Kirkwood (authors, 'Tomorrow's Islam'), Ann McDowell (student of Muslim-Christian relations). Entry by donation. 2.00 pm – 4.00 pm, the Crypt, St Patrick's Church Hill. Tel: (02) 9816 4262. Web: www.catalyst-for-renewal.com.au.

3 APRIL. SPIRITUALITY IN THE PUB, KINCUMBER (NSW). 'And the greatest of these is love': Peter Brown and Chris Kokegei. The Kincumber Hotel, Avoca Drive. Info: (02) 4367 2743 or (02) 4334 3174. Web: <http://www.catalyst-for-renewal.com.au/news.htm>.

3 APRIL. SEMINAR: HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SLAVERY IN AUSTRALIA – WHAT COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS NEED TO KNOW (NSW). Non-government and government presenters will address basic concepts of trafficking and slavery, how to identify and refer victims, victim support, the role of government agencies and the work of the Anti-Slavery Project and its partners. Presented by the Anti-Slavery Project of the Faculty of Law, University of Technology Sydney and sponsored by Immigrant Women's Speakout Association of NSW. 9.00 am – 12.00 pm, Jubilee Room, Parramatta Town Hall, 182 Church Street Mall. RSVP by 30 March. Info: (02) 9635 8022 or women@speakout.org.au. Web: <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/newsevents/index.html>

3 APRIL. SPIRITUALITY IN THE PUB, VERDUN (SA). 'War, Peace & the Spirit' – Dr Jason Garrood, Ruth Russell & Jan Ruff-O'Herne. 7.30 pm, Stanley Bridge Tavern, Onkaparinga Road, Verdun. Info: (02) 8388 5957; Web: <http://www.catalyst-for-renewal.com.au/news.htm>.

3 APRIL. PUBLIC TALK – 'FINDING GOD IN UNEXPECTED PLACES' (ACT). Guest speaker: Chantelle Ogilvie, recipient of inaugural Young Catholic Women's Interfaith Fellowship. Presented by Office for the Participation of Women and ACU. 6.00-7.00pm. Australian Catholic University, B10, Blackfriars Building, Signadou, Antill Street, Watson. Inquiries to OPW (02) 6201 9867 or director.opw@catholic.org.au.

4 APRIL. SEMINAR – THE ROLE OF NGOs IN GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY (NSW). Presented by Amnesty International. Presenters: Carol Berry (Solicitor, Public Interest Advocacy Centre; lecturer in human rights and the law, UWS); Kiran Grewal (Assistant legal advisor AI Secretariat London; Senior Researcher, University of California). \$10 / \$5; 6.30 pm – 8.30 pm, University of Sydney Law School, 173-175 Philip St. Tel (02) 9217 7670; email nswhrsteam@amnesty.org.au; Web <http://www.amnesty.org.au/?a=69909>.

4 APRIL. SEMINAR – THE WAR IN DARFUR AND PROSPECTS FOR PEACE (VIC).

Researcher Dr Alex de Waal will give a one-hour presentation on the war in Darfur, the failed peace talks and the need for a new concept of peace support. Supported by Oxfam Australia and University of Melbourne. 5.30 pm arrival/drinks for a 6.00 pm start. Melbourne Law School, 185 Pelham St, Carlton. RSVP by 2 April to (03) 9289-9313. Web:

[http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/docs/current/Alex%20de%20Waal%20on%20the%20Darfur%20Crisis%20Flyer%20Feb%2007%20\(2\)1.pdf](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/docs/current/Alex%20de%20Waal%20on%20the%20Darfur%20Crisis%20Flyer%20Feb%2007%20(2)1.pdf)

4 APRIL. TALK: HOW CAN WE STOP GLOBAL WARMING? (QLD)

Emma Brindal from Friends of the Earth and Dave Charlton from Socialist Worker will talk about the effects of climate change and the strategy needed to reverse it. 7.00 pm, Ahimsa House, 26 Horan St, West End. Contact: jointheiso@hotmail.com. Web:

<http://www.active.org.au/brisbane/calendar/?day=4&month=4>.

4 APRIL: SPIRITUALITY IN THE PUB, PADDINGTON (NSW). ‘The Heart of the Matter: Forgiveness’ – Mark Byrne. 7.30 pm, Bellevue Hotel, 159 Hargrave Street, Paddington. Info: (02) 9387 3152; web <http://www.catalyst-for-renewal.com.au/news.htm>.

6 APRIL. WAY OF THE CROSS IN WEST END (QLD). A contemporary reflection on the suffering and pain of people in the West End Community for Good Friday. Walk the streets of West End with members of the Christian Churches on a traditional Good Friday Way of the Cross.

9:30am, beginning West End Uniting Church Sussex Street. Contact: Tony Robertson, robertsontony@yahoo.com. St Mary’s Community South Brisbane:

<http://merivale.wordpress.com>.

11 APRIL. SEMINAR: DAVID HICKS IN COURT: AN UPDATE ON COURT ACTION IN AUSTRALIA AND THE US (ACT). Presented by the Centre for International and Public Law, ANU. To discuss David Hick’s trial before the US Military Commission and his claim in the Federal Court against the Commonwealth. Chair: Professor Donald R. Rothwell; Speakers: Prof. Hilary Charlesworth, Prof. Kim Rubenstein and Dr Christopher Ward. 5.30–7.00 pm, Law Link Theatre, ANU College of Law (Cnr Fellows and East Roads), ANU. RSVP to: cipl@law.anu.edu.au by 10 April 2007. Ph (02) 6125 0454. Web: <http://law.anu.edu.au/cipl/events.asp>.

11–13 APRIL. CONFERENCE: AFRICAN RESETTLEMENT IN AUSTRALIA (VIC). The inaugural African Resettlement in Australia 2007 Conference will be held at the University of Melbourne – a grass-roots initiative of Victoria’s African communities. Places are sold out and registration is closed. For more details, ring (03) 8344 3682, email

heather.wringe@union.unimelb.edu.au or go to <http://www.union.unimelb.edu.au/conferences/att/>.

13–15 APRIL. CARITAS AUSTRALIA’S FESTIVAL OF GLOBAL CONCERN (NSW). A three-day trans-Tasman gathering for students in Years 11 and 12 to deepen their understanding of justice, peace, human rights and aid and development issues. One of Latin America’s leading activists for justice and human rights, Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez from Honduras, will be present. Cardinal Rodriguez has been a leader in confronting corruption and championing the rights of the poor and marginalised. Email melissam@caritas.org.au, Ph 02 9923 3455, fax 02 9956 5782. Web: http://www.caritas.org.au/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Festival_of_Global_Concern.

14 APRIL. LUNCHTIME TALK WITH FR BRIAN GORE (NSW). In cooperation with Jubilee Australia. Columban priest Father Brian Gore has been living and working in the Philippines for many years amongst the people worst affected by the debt crisis. Hear his account of why we need to urgently address the debt crisis in poor countries. 12.00 noon, Sydney Mechanics School of Arts, Level 1, 280 Pitt St, Sydney. Cost: \$7 donation at the door. RSVP (02) 8259 0826; email alow@ncca.org.au by Tuesday 10 April.

15 APRIL. CCJP ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, INCLUDING A TALK BY DONNA MULHEARN (NSW). Catholics in Coalition for Justice and Peace present Donna Mulhearn, a journalist and state government public relations officer, who went to Baghdad in early 2003 to risk her life as a 'human shield'. 9.45 am – 12.45 pm, 1st floor, 9 Alexandra Ave, Croydon. Donation: \$10.00. For more information phone (02) 9745 0820 or email ccjp@bigpond.com. Web: <http://www.ccjpoz.org/>.

16 APRIL. SPIRITUALITY IN THE PUB, NORTH SYDNEY (NSW). 'Human Dignity and Bio Ethics – Do not claim to be wiser than you are.' Dr Bridget Vout and Neil Ormerod. 7.30 pm, Union Hotel, Pacific Highway and West Street, North Sydney. Info: (02) 9958 5963. Web: <http://www.catalyst-for-renewal.com.au/news.htm>.

17 APRIL. PUBLIC LECTURE: MULTICULTURALISM AND THE WELFARE STATE (NSW). 'Is diversity the enemy of redistribution?' by Prof. Keith Banting of Queen's University, Canada. Sponsored by the Social Policy Research Centre and the School of Social Sciences and International Studies, UNSW. 201, Law Building UNSW. RSVP to Megan Griffiths by Monday 16 April. Ph: (02) 9385-7817 or email megangriffiths@unsw.edu.au. Information: http://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au/seminars/2007%20Program/Banting_Flyer.pdf.

17 APRIL. SEMINAR: REFLECTIONS ON THE DEATH PENALTY (VIC). Presented by the Castan Centre for Human Rights Law. Speakers: Andrea Durbach, Director, Australian Human Rights Centre, UNSW; Peter Norden SJ AO, Convenor, Victorian Criminal Justice Coalition; and Brian Morley, journalist. 5.15 pm for 5.30 pm, DLA Phillips Fox, Level 21, 140 William Street, Melbourne (Cnr Bourke and William Sts). RSVP: Natasha.Stojanovich@dlaphillipsfox.com

17 APRIL. PUBLIC TALK: 'I AM WOMAN, MUSLIM, AUSTRALIAN' (ACT). Presented by Office for the Participation of Women and ACU. Guest speaker: Ms Shakira Hussein, writer and researcher, focusing on Islam, gender and South Asia. 6.00 pm – 7.00 pm, Australian Catholic University, B10, Blackfriars Building, Signadou, Antill Street, Watson. Inquiries to OPW 6201 9867 or director.opw@catholic.org.au.

18 APRIL. SPIRITUALITY IN THE PUB, WAITARA (NSW). 'Ours is a destitute time. What is the way forward for religion?' Tim O'Hearn & Libby Rogerson ibvm. The Blue Gum Hotel, Waitara. Info: (02) 9869 1036 a/h; web: <http://www.catalyst-for-renewal.com.au/news.htm>.

18 APRIL. SPIRITUALITY IN THE PUB, ENGADINE (NSW). 'A place of freedom to grow': Amir Mesrinejad and tba. Sutherland United Services Club. Info: (02) 9520 0617 or (02) 9548 2475. Web: <http://www.catalyst-for-renewal.com.au/news.htm>.

20–22 APRIL. MELBOURNE SOCIAL FORUM – CHANGE THE POLITICAL CLIMATE: TURN UP THE HEAT! (VIC). The Saturday and Sunday (21st, 22nd) event will include workshops, stalls, music, films, and food at 10.00 am, Ceres Environmental Park, 8 Lee St. Brunswick East, Melbourne. Organisations can have stalls (\$50) and submit proposals for free workshops related to social justice, ecological sustainability, alternative education, alternative media and other themes. Email: info@melbournesocialforum.org. Web: http://www.melbourne.indymedia.org/calendar/event_display_detail.php?event_id=3982&day=21&month=4&year=2007.

21 APRIL. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – GATHERING AT LA PEROUSE ABORIGINAL MISSION, PORT BOTANY (NSW). A gathering to discuss black deaths in custody, stolen wages, Aboriginal Embassy, return of Aboriginal remains and more. 9.00 am. For more information, contact (02) 4394 0662 or email kirazj@gmail.com.

21 APRIL. NATIONAL DAY OF PROTEST FOR DAVID HICKS (NSW). A national day of protest demanding the repatriation of David Hicks, Sydney, Town Hall at 12.00 noon. Contact: 0401 758 871. Web: www.stopwarcoalition.org.

22 APRIL. UNIONS NSW PRESENTS ROCKIN' FOR RIGHTS (NSW). An extravaganza of Aussie rock talent: say no to John Howard's unfair workplace laws. Assemble at Hyde Park north at 11.00 am and then march to the Sydney Cricket Ground, where some of Australia's top music acts will be rockin' for your rights at work. Entry: purchase of a \$5.00 wristband – available at Hyde Park (11.00 am) or at the SCG (opens 11.45 am.). Information: <http://www.rockinforrights.com.au/event.html>.

24 APRIL. PUBLIC TALK – 'SHARING SILENCE: INTERFAITH DIALOGUE AND THE ART OF MEDITATION' (ACT). Presented by Office for the Participation of Women and ACU. Guest speaker: Rev Dr Sarah Bachelard, lecturer in theology at St Mark's National Theological Centre. 6.00 pm -7.00 pm. Australian Catholic University, B10, Blackfriars Building, Signadou, Antill Street, Watson. Inquiries to (02) 6201 9867 or director.opw@catholic.org.au.

27 APRIL. CATALYST DINNER: 'UNVEILING ISLAM' (NSW). Guest speakers: Afroz Ali (President and founder, Al-Ghazzali Centre for Islamic Studies) and Zuleykha Keskin (Vice President, Affinity Intercultural Foundation Women's Group). 7.30 pm, Villa Maria Parish Hall, cr Mary St and Gladesville Rd, Hunters Hill. \$40.00 per person. Reservations essential: RSVP 19 April. Tel (02) 9816 4262; web www.catalyst-for-renewal.com.au.

28 APRIL TO 13 MAY. FAIR TRADE FORTNIGHT (AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND). By changing to fair trade today, you can change the lives of farmers and producers across the developing world. Events and speakers throughout Australia, including Guillermo Vargas Leiton, General Manager, Coopesanta Elena, Costa Rica. For more information, go to <http://www.fta.org.au/ftf/index.html?PHPSESSID=0588554868153cd9615750e10120d318>.

MARCH NEWS MONITOR

Carbon levy to hit poor, Vinnies researcher fears

Introducing a \$10 a tonne carbon levy to fight climate change will hit pensioners and other low-income earners and will erode government concessions assisting the poor, a Vinnies researcher said.

Sobrino right to apply Gospel to injustice, Vatican paper said

The Vatican newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano* said that Spanish Jesuit Jon Sobrino was right to apply the Gospel to concrete situations of social injustice but the liberation theologian risked going astray with his "Jesus of history".

Release Hicks now: Bishop Saunders

The ACSJC's Bishop Christopher Saunders, called for David Hicks' immediate release despite his guilty plea to a charge of providing material support for terrorism.

Guantanamo "an aberration", Death Row sister said

On visit to Australia to prepare for an opera based on her book, *Dead Man Walking*, Sr Helen Prejean said that Guantanamo Bay is an aberration and a corruption of US values and that the release of David Hicks should be a priority.

Catholic activist accuses Qld police over investigation "farce"

A Brisbane peace activist and Catholic Worker stalwart whose arrest by Queensland police was deemed illegal by a Brisbane magistrate said that a police investigation of the circumstances of his arrest was a "farce from start to finish".

Catholic farmers slam Brazil's Lula over ethanol

Two weeks after Brazilian President Lula da Silva signed an "alliance" with the US to promote ethanol-producing crops, Brazil's Catholic Farmers Pastoral slammed the deal for enriching landowners at the expense of landless peasants.

Politicians can't be bothered with social questions: NSW churches

With NSW moving to parliamentary elections this weekend, the Council of Churches revealed that only five state politicians bothered to answer a questionnaire on key social issues.

Jesuit justice centre "unsustainable"

Sydney-based Uniya Jesuit Social Justice Centre, established in 1989, will close in May after the research institute's board concluded that it would not be sustainable over the long term.

Zimbabwe Church accuses S Africa over failure to act

As accusations of a 1980s massacre of 20,000 people by forces loyal to Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe are revived, the Catholic Church accused South Africa of failing to use its economic clout to pressure the authoritarian regime.

Immigration Minister betrays religious principles, refugee lawyer said

Refugee lawyer Julian Burnside accused Immigration Minister Kevin Andrews, a Catholic, of betraying his religious principles and breaching international law over the sending of 82 Sri Lankan asylum seekers to detention camps in Nauru.

London churches go green together

Britain's Westminster Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor called on "followers of Jesus" to play a part in combating climate change, endorsing suggestions made in an ecumenical guidebook for London churches on reducing energy use and introducing recycling.

Young Tanzanian woman seeks forced marriages ban

Representing the Catholic NGO Maryknoll at a United Nations conference on the status of women, a young Masai woman who recently escaped a forced marriage in Tanzania called on the international body to work for an end to the practice.

Give priority to "poverty postcodes", agencies say

Welfare agencies are pressing the NSW government to implement recommendations from the recent Vinson report to give funding priority to so-called "poverty code" areas where intergenerational poverty is concentrated.

Britain becoming Europe's "moral poor man": report

A Cambridge University report commissioned by the European Catholic Caritas agencies warned that Britain could become Europe's "moral poor man" because of policies that ignore the needs of the poorly paid migrant workers who help keep the nation's inflation rate down.

Toowoomba diocese douses concerns over KKK

The Toowoomba diocese's Catholic Social Justice Commission said that people should be more concerned about Aboriginal health and education than with the distribution of a Ku Klux Klan recruitment brochure in the Queensland provincial city.

Catholic students put gender on agenda

In a statement for International Women's Day, an Asia-Pacific Catholic student group called for effective work for gender justice and equality and criticised men as the main perpetrators of gender violence.

Women bear brunt of exploitation: Vatican

The Holy See's permanent observer, Archbishop Celestino Migliore, told the United Nations last week that women "bear the brunt of the world's child prostitution, sexual exploitation, abuse, domestic violence, child labour and human trafficking".

Archdiocese builds Adelaide's first six-star green office block

A new building featuring rooftop solar panels and energy-efficient lighting being developed by the Archdiocese of Adelaide to house SA Water and facilities for St Aloysius' College will be South Australia's first six-star green office building.

- courtesy Church Resources' CathNews, stories in detail at <http://www.cathnews.com/news/703>

APRIL SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR

- 1 SUN** Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday) marks the beginning of Holy Week
2 MON Death of Pope John Paul II, 2005 Jewish Passover (2nd to 10th)
5 THU Holy Thursday
6 FRI Good Friday
7 SAT Holy Saturday; World Health Day
8 SUN Easter Sunday
10 TUE 120 nations sign treaty banning biological warfare, 1972;
Belfast Agreement signed Northern Ireland, 1998
12 THU Holocaust Remembrance Day;
1990, USA cannery Starkist announced cessation of use of tuna caught in drag nets; number of dolphins killed as a result of tuna fishing has since fallen by 97%
14 SAT First presidential elections elect Xanana Gusmao as President of East Timor;
2002 Death of Rachel Carson; 1964: author of Silent Spring (1962) which alerted the world to the dangers of the use of chemical pesticides
15 SUN 2nd Sunday of Easter;
Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Royal Commission Final Report signed, 1991
18 WED World Heritage Day;
Albert Einstein died, 1955
19 THU Pope Benedict XVI elected, 2005
22 SUN 3rd Sunday of Easter;
International Earth Day
23 MON World Book & Copyright Day
24 TUE First United Nations Conference opens with 45 nations attending, 1945
25 WED ANZAC Day
26 THU Bishop Gerardi murdered in Guatemala, 1998
28 SAT St Peter Chanel, first martyr from Oceania, killed on Futuna in the New Hebrides in 1841
29 SUN 4th Sunday of Easter International Guide Dogs Day

Notes on these dates are available in the printed ACSJC Social Justice Diary (cost \$6.60, to order go to http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/content/publications/social_justice_calendar.html, or call 02 9956 5811)

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