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From the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council,
the social justice and human rights agency of the Catholic Church in Australia

<http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au>

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FROM THE SECRETARIAT

Dear Friends,

The Australian Catholic Social Justice Council and its Secretariat wish you the joy of Easter.

The reality of the resurrection, and the optimism that is inspired by the promise of salvation stands in contrast to the many conflicts and atrocities committed around the world. Yet it is through the circumstance of turmoil, suffering and despair that we are called to bring hope.

In his *Urbi et Orbi* message on Easter Sunday, Pope Benedict XVI urged Christians and all people of good will to be open to Christ's redeeming love. He said, 'Today, just as he did with his disciples in Galilee before returning to the Father, the risen Jesus now

sends us everywhere as witnesses of his hope, and he reassures us: I am with you always, all days, until the end of the world (cf. Mt 28:20). Fixing the gaze of our spirit on the glorious wounds of his transfigured body, we can understand the meaning and value of suffering, we can tend the many wounds that continue to disfigure humanity in our own day.'

He said that individual, community and international national relationships characterised by selfishness, injustice, hatred and violence are 'scourges of humanity' and 'wounds that torture the souls and bodies of countless of our brothers and sisters'. He called for solutions that will bring peace and restore the common good particularly in African regions like Dafur and Somalia, 'the tormented Middle East' - in the Holy Land, Iraq and Lebanon, and with regard to the latest oppression in Tibet.

He said these regions are crying out for healing and the solidarity of people who 'perform deeds of charity in his name, make an active commitment to justice, and spread luminous signs of hope in areas bloodied by conflict and wherever the dignity of the human person continues to be scorned and trampled. It is hoped that these are precisely the places where gestures of moderation and forgiveness will increase!' (refer: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/urbi/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20080323_urbi-easter_en.html)

Here in Australia, Church leaders shared in the prayer for peace and renewed commitment that Easter brings.

Archbishop Philip Wilson, President of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference observed that, 'In the world today, violence seems to be on the increase and the possibility of peace seems ever more distant as the days go on.

'Everywhere we turn, senseless violence is influencing the lives of poor and innocent people and one can be tempted to think that in the midst of all this there is no way for us to make a difference.'

However, in the face of these seemingly hopeless situations he said that people who seek peace in 'the ordinary circumstances of their daily lives', in their communities and through humanitarian and charitable works exemplified the meaning of this season.

'Such actions make the world a better place and are what the Lord requires from those who honour him in his death and resurrection', the Archbishop said. (refer: <http://www.acbc.catholic.org.au/bishops/confpres/200803191558.htm>)

Christian leaders around Australia also highlighted areas of optimism and progress as well those circumstances crying out for healing and new life.

Richard Menteith, National President of the Churches of Christ, affirmed 'it is Jesus we celebrate and it is in acknowledging His death and resurrection we find the answer to the world's problems'.

Highlighting the needs of the most vulnerable members of Australian Society, Rev Dr Ross Clifford, President of the Baptist Union, said 'the death and resurrection of Jesus has implications for our social arrangements as well as our spiritual destiny.' He specifically mentioned how the housing, health and education needs of Indigenous people needed to be a priority for all Australians.

Anglican Primate, Archbishop Phillip Aspinall said, 'last month's bi-partisan apology to the nation's Indigenous people, especially members of the Stolen Generations, was given and received in a spirit of graciousness that prepares the way for the healing of some of the most painful chapters of our national life'.

Rev Gregor Henderson, President of the Uniting Church, emphasised the initiatives of leaders of all faiths, in Australia and internationally, to foster peace and understanding. He mentioned particularly the commitment among Jewish, Christian and Muslim leaders for peace in the Holy Land and observed how 'Jesus came to live and teach God's love for the whole world, not just for his particular followers. This Easter we encourage you to give thanks for Jesus; a man who promoted peace and advocated justice for all humans; and the man whom we Christians worship as Son of God and Saviour of the world'.

The messages of the church leaders can be found on the website of the National Council of Churches in Australia at: http://www.ncca.org.au/media_releases/080319_easter_2008_messages_from_australian_church_leaders

May the joy of Easter and the hope renewed by the risen Christ inspire the many works of justice and peace in our nation and around the world.

John Ferguson
National Executive Officer



Current Issues / Resources

PLEASE NOTE - ACSJC NEW CONTACT DETAILS For written correspondence and other postage:

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NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES - PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. Leaders of member churches of the National Council of Churches in Australia have issued two important statements concerning peace in the Middle East. At the end of November 2007, the leaders drew attention to the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian crisis in Iraq and highlighted Australia's moral responsibility to help protect Iraqi civilians and those displaced by the violence. They called for a significant increase in aid to Iraq's internally displaced people and refugees. They also called for adequate funds for later repatriation, reintegration, reconstruction and development. (Refer: http://www.ncca.org.au/media_releases?p=3245)

Early in March, the NCCA passed a series of resolutions on the situation in the Holy Land. Among those resolutions, the NCCA affirms the right of the state of Israel to exist, and to exist within secure internationally-recognised borders, as well as the right of the people of Palestine to be freed from more than 40 years of military occupation by Israel, to live within secure internationally-recognised borders. The Australian Government is encouraged to do all it can to support the current peace negotiations between Palestine and Israel, in the interests of ending the occupation and bringing a just and lasting peace to the

peoples of Israel and Palestine. Churches in Australia are encouraged to pray for a just and lasting peace for the peoples of the Holy Land, and to support initiatives for peace. (refer: http://www.ncca.org.au/media_releases/080311_national_council_of_churches_in_australia_passes_resolutions_on_the_holy_land)

CAMPAIGN, 'STAND UP FOR TIBET'. *GetUp* is running this campaign to help Australians have a positive influence what is happening in Tibet. A petition calls on the Prime Minister to urge the Chinese Government to respect the human rights of Tibetans and to allow international monitors and journalists access to Tibetan areas. The petition coincides with the lead up to Prime Minister Rudd's meeting with the Chinese President and Premier. For further info and links visit: <http://www.getup.org.au/campaign/StandUpForTibet&id=316>

NEW SERVICE - SAMARITAN ACCOMMODATION. Samaritan Accommodation is a new supported accommodation service that has just opened for adult migrant women who have experienced human trafficking, slavery and/or slavery-like practices. Samaritan Accommodation, based in Sydney is a new initiative of the Salvation Army. The service is now open for referral and brochures will soon be available in community languages. If you would like to make a referral, please call (02) 9211 5794 and ask to speak to a Samaritan Accommodation staff member. They will consider referrals from anywhere in Australia. Please feel free to call if you have a possible referral that you want to discuss or if you are unsure if the referent has experienced trafficking/slavery.

YOUNG JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR AWARD: 'WHAT ARE YOUR WORDS WORTH?' *Australian Catholics* is calling on students from Catholic schools around Australia to write about what's important to them. Are you passionate about an issue such as homelessness, drug abuse, global poverty or refugees? Do you know someone with an inspiring story to share? By doing some research, conducting an interview, and writing a story - you can help make a difference. The 2008 *Australian Catholics* Young Journalist Award is open to students in both primary and secondary schools, giving out prizes for the best articles in three sections: 12 and under (winner \$200; runner up \$100); 13 to 15 (\$300; \$150) 16 and over (\$400; \$200). The winning schools from each section will also win \$500 each. Entries close 7 July 2008. Winning stories will be published in the Spring 2008 edition of *Australian Catholics*. For further info and to download an entry form, visit: <http://www.australiancatholics.com.au/content/view/4/9/>

WORLD YOUTH DAY COMMITTEE CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS. With only a few months to go, the countdown to World Youth Day Sydney 2008 (WYD08) is on, and organisers are offering 8,000 domestic and international volunteers the exciting opportunity to help run the largest event Australia has ever hosted. Volunteers will help in many areas including operations and crowd management, customer service, language and translations, staffing, hospitality & catering, accommodation, production, communications, liturgy and evangelization. Volunteers can either work during the event week, 14 - 20 July, or in roles available in the months preceding WYD08. All volunteers must be over the age of 18. WYD08 is taking applications now. For more information and to apply, visit www.wyd2008.org/volunteer or call 02 9390 5997.

INTERNATIONAL EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS IN QUEBEC. The 49th International Eucharistic Congress is scheduled for Quebec, Canada, from 15th to 22nd June this year. These Congresses are extraordinary events in the life of the Universal Church, bringing together large numbers of Catholic people and pastors from throughout the world in week-long celebrations of devotion to Jesus Christ in the Blessed Eucharist. It remains desirable and appropriate, however, that there be a notable contingent of pilgrims from Australia, even though World Youth Day in July is our first priority. People who wish to participate in the Congress are welcome to contact Bishop Patrick Dougherty, the appointed Delegate of the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference, to arrange registration (P.O. Box 246, Bathurst 2795), phone 02 6331 3611, fax 02 6331 9453, email bishop@bathurst.catholic.org.au; fee for necessary registration (\$Can 230 = \$Aus 250 approx.)

CAMPAIGN - 'KEEP POWER IN OUR HANDS'. The Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network (AFTINET) is supporting a community campaign against NSW electricity privatisation. Responding to the NSW Government's plan to sell its electricity retail business and lease its power generating plants to private companies, the campaign organisers say that privatisation will not increase government income, it will mean that profits will come before the environment, and the government will have less ability to regulate a vital public service. Privatisation will mean higher prices for an essential service and the likelihood of more blackouts. The campaign website provides the means to send a message to the Premier and to get a petition to sign, and take to your family, friends and community group. Visit www.stoptheselloff.org.au for more information.



Latest Publications

Orders: phone (02) 8306 3499 or download an order form from the ACSJC website: <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/CONTENT/PDF/TEMPLATE-ORDERFORM.pdf>

ORDER NOW! - 2008 SOCIAL JUSTICE DIARY

The 2008 Diary focuses on the theme of poverty and affluence. It includes the dates of significant events, anniversaries and special days which celebrate particular aspects of social justice and highlight the theme. It 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

DISCUSSION GUIDE - WORLD DAY OF PEACE MESSAGE 2008

On 1 January, the Holy Father delivered his World Day of Peace message. The theme of his message is *The Human Family, A Community 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>

SERIES PAPER - 'CONFRONTING THE DEATH PENALTY'

The latest paper in the Catholic Social Justice Series consists of four essays by authoritative writers on the moral, legal and personal aspects of the death penalty. It considers

capital punishment in the light of the attacks of September 2001, the international 'war on terror' and the moral and political problems thrown up as we see capital punishment rigorously applied in countries close to us. (\$6.60 a copy, plus postage - postage rates listed below)

SERIES PAPER: TRAUMA AND FORGIVENESS: LESSONS FROM EAST TIMOR AND SOUTH AFRICA

Catholic Social Justice Series Paper No.60. Dr Mark Byrne considers the attempts of nations to heal the wounds left by violence by seeking "transitional justice" and setting up truth commissions. (\$6.60 a copy, plus postage - postage rates listed below)

(Catholic Social Justice Series papers and the Social Justice Diary: \$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)

Orders: phone (02) 8306 3499 or download an order form from the ACSJC website: <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/CONTENT/PDF/TEMPLATE-ORDERFORM.pdf>



This Month's Notices

1 - 2 APRIL. CAMBODIAN DANCE TOUR BRISBANE (QLD). The Ignatian World Youth Day program MAGiS08 and Jesuit Mission are sponsoring a Cambodian dance troupe to perform in Australia. At each performance, Mgr Kike Figaredo SJ, the Apostolic Prefect of Battambang, will speak about the healing impact this program has had in the lives of the people of Cambodia. The performance on 1 April will be held at Stuartholme Girls College and on April 2 at St Rita's College. Tickets: \$20 Adults; \$5 Children- Supper included. Contact Jesuit Mission Sydney for ticket bookings: (02) 9955 8585 or tas.rafeeq@jesuitmission.org.au. Web: <http://www.jesuitmission.org.au>

2 APRIL. SPIRITUALITY IN THE PUB PADDINGTON (NSW). Join Donna Mulhearn, a human shield from the Iraq War and member of *Pine Gap 4* and Fr Paul Ghanem, a Franciscan friar with first-hand experience of the aftermath of the Israeli-Lebanese War, in a discussion about the truth and consequences of war. Donations welcomed. 7:30pm - 9:00pm, Upstairs Room, Bellevue Hotel, 159 Hargrave Street, Paddington. Contact: Spirituality in the Pub Paddington (02) 9387 3152. Web: <http://www.catalyst-for-renewal.com.au>

3 APRIL. CONFERENCE: 'CLIMATE CHANGE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE' (VIC). This conference will explore the social justice implications of climate change using a range of interdisciplinary approaches and will raise new perspectives on the impact of climate change. Speakers include: Prof David Karoly (IPCC Scientist and Federation Fellow), Prof John Quiggin (UQ Federation Fellow) and Prof John Thwaites (former Dept Premier). There will also be speakers from the Victorian Council of Social Service, and the Brotherhood of St Laurence. 8:45am - 5:00pm, University of Melbourne Law School, 185 Pelham Street, Carlton. \$40. Registration and RSVP essential to jmoss@unimelb.edu.au. Telephone: (03) 8344 5091. Web: <http://www.philosophy.unimelb.edu.au/social-justice/climate/>

4 APRIL. PUBLIC LECTURE: 'CLOSING THE GAPS IN INDIGENOUS MORTALITY & HOUSING: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE SOCIAL SCIENCES' (ACT). Speakers include: Dr Elizabeth Sullivan (UNSW), Professor Francesca Merlan (ANU), Dr Will Sanders (ANU) and Professor Paul Memmott (UQ). Free public lectures relating to the Prime Minister's target to halve the gap in infant mortality rates between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children within a decade, and the subsequent necessity to improve housing conditions for Indigenous Australians. 1:00pm-4:30pm, Visions Theatre, National Museum of Australia, Lawson Crescent, Acton Peninsula, Acton. Telephone: (02) 6125 0052 or (02) 6125 4144. Web: http://billboard.anu.edu.au/event_view.asp?id=26038

4 APRIL. PUBLIC SEMINAR: 'PAKISTAN: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE TENSE' (QLD). Dr Ashutosh Misra, Griffith University, will give a research paper on 'Pakistan: Past, Present and Future Tense'. The event is part of the Conflict and Security Seminar Series run by the School of Political Science and International Studies. 3:00pm - 5:00pm, University of Queensland, Building General Purpose North 3 (39A), Room 537, St Lucia Campus. Email: s.kaempf@uq.edu.au. Web: <http://www.polsis.uq.edu.au/index.html?page=57171>

4 - 5 APRIL. CAMBODIAN DANCE TOUR ADELAIDE (SA). The Ignatian World Youth Day program MAGiS08 and Jesuit Mission are sponsoring a Cambodian dance troupe to perform in Australia. At each performance, Mgr Kike Figaredo SJ, the Apostolic Prefect of Battambang, will speak about the healing impact this program has had in the lives of the people of Cambodia. The performance on 4 April will be held at St Mary's College and on 5 April at St Michael's Church Hall, Clare. Tickets: \$20 Adults; \$5 Children- Supper included. Contact Jesuit Mission Sydney for ticket bookings: (02) 9955 8585 or email: tas.rafeeq@jesuitmission.org.au. Web: <http://www.jesuitmission.org.au>

5 APRIL - 13 APRIL. NATIONAL YOUTH WEEK (NATIONAL). National Youth Week (NYW) is Australia's largest celebration of young people. Thousands of young people aged 12-25 years all across Australia are involved in NYW each year. It aims to encourage young people to share ideas, attend live events, showcase their talents, have their voices heard on issues of concern to them, and to celebrate their contribution to the community. Contact: nationalyouthweek@deewr.gov.au or 1300 663 500 for specific information on events in your state or territory. Web: <http://www.youthweek.com/events/default.aspx>

6 APRIL. OXFAM WALK AGAINST WANT FREMANTLE (WA). Join hundreds of others at the Walk against Want this year in Fremantle to raise funds for Oxfam Australia's work against poverty and injustice. Pioneer Park, opposite Fremantle Railway Station. Walk begins at 8:30am. Registration essential. Telephone: (08) 9335 3104 or (08) 9336 3111; Email: abolger@iinet.net.au or shop61@oxfamshop.org.au. Web: <http://www.oxfam.org.au/walk/wheretowalk/wa/>

6 - 12 APRIL. SCREENING, TOUCHED BY THEIR LIGHT (NATIONAL). This week the Church joins in marking the UN's World Health Day. In Australia, one of the most serious health issues is undiagnosed and untreated depression, which can lead to suicide. Touched By Their Light is a moving film from Albert Street Productions looks at the story of six families and how they have coped with the heartbreak of youth suicide. From 1.00pm each day on Aurora Community Television, Foxtel Digital and Austar Digital Channel 183. www.catholicchurchtv.com.au

6 APRIL - 13 APRIL. NSW SENIORS WEEK (NSW). NSW Seniors Week celebrates the valuable contribution seniors make to our community. 2008 also marks 50 years of Seniors Week celebrations. The theme for 2008, *LIVE LIFE*, aims to encourage seniors to active participate at one of the 700 events taking place across NSW. Telephone: 13 12 44; Email: swfeed-back@dadhc.nsw.gov.au. Web: <http://www.nswseniorsweek.com.au>

7 APRIL. HREOC HUMAN RIGHTS LAW SEMINAR (NSW). The legal section of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) is presenting a seminar examining the human rights issues related to homelessness. Chaired by the Human Rights Commissioner and Commissioner responsible for Disability Discrimination, Graeme Innes, this HREOC Human Rights Law Seminar will feature Cassandra Goldie, Director of the Sex Discrimination Unit at HREOC, Robin Banks, Executive Director of the Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC) and Sue Cripps from NSW Homelessness. Entry is free but places are limited. Please RSVP to associate@humanrights.gov.au. 12:30-2:00pm, Hearing Room, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. Level 8, Piccadilly Tower, 133 Castlereagh Street, Sydney. Telephone: (02) 9284 9698

7 APRIL. GLOBAL AFFAIRS DIALOGUE FOR APRIL (NSW). Dialogues will explore the environmental impact of climate change, war and social strife, and the wide range of political and religious influences that shape our attitudes, values and actions. Enquiries: 0431 605 374; email: dialogue_quest@hotmail.com. 6.30 pm for 7.00 pm. Mitchell Theatre, Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts, Level 1, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney. Web: www.sydneymsa.com.au

7 - 18 APRIL. AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S CHINA CAMPAIGN (SA). The Prospect Group have arranged for a display at the Prospect Library. This will highlight Amnesty International's China Campaign. Prospect Library, 1 Thomas Street Nailsworth. Telephone: (08) 8344 5454 for opening hours. Web: <http://sant.amnesty.org.au/>

8 APRIL. PUBLIC SEMINAR: 'THE FIGHT AGAINST RACISM AND FOR THE RIGHTS OF MINORITIES IN THE 21ST CENTURY' (NSW). Speaker: Gay McDougall, UN Independent Expert on Minority Rights & Distinguished Scholar, Washington College of Law. Co-hosted with HREOC and Amnesty International. 5:30pm, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, Level 8, Piccadilly Tower, 133 Castlereagh Street, Sydney. Email: law.scil@usyd.edu.au. Web: <http://www.law.usyd.edu.au/scil/events.html>

8 - 9 APRIL. CAMBODIAN DANCE TOUR MELBOURNE (VIC). The Ignatian World Youth Day program MAGiS08 and Jesuit Mission are sponsoring a Cambodian dance troupe to perform in Australia. At each performance, Mgr Kike Figaredo SJ, the Apostolic Prefect of Battambang, will speak about the healing impact this program has had in the lives of the people of Cambodia. The performance on 8 April will be held at St Ignatius Parish Hall, Richmond and on 9 April at Xavier College Kew. Tickets: \$20 Adults; \$5 Children- Supper included. Contact Jesuit Mission Sydney for ticket bookings: (02) 9955 8585 or tas.rafeeq@jesuitmission.org.au. Web: <http://www.jesuitmission.org.au>

9 APRIL. PUBLIC LECTURE: 'THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN LEBANON' (VIC). The future of the Palestinian refugees remains one of the key stumbling blocks to a peace deal in the Middle East. While the world's attention is focused once again on events in the Occupied Territories, it is the fate of the 'external' refugees which is emerging as the most complex challenge for Israel and the Palestinian leadership. Presented by Dr. Kylie Baxter, researcher at the National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies at the University of Melbourne. 6.30 - 7.30pm, Carrillo Gantner Theatre, Sidney Myer Asia Centre (bldg 158), Parkville. Enquiries: (03) 8344 0895; Email: nceis-info@unimelb.edu.au; Web: <http://www.nceis.unimelb.edu.au/events/seminars.html>.

10 APRIL. PEACE FORUM (NSW). A public forum to promote peace and mutual understanding amongst all Australians. Hosted by the City of Sydney and organised by the Columban Mission Institute, the Peace Forum is regularly held around Sydney where Christian and Muslim speakers discuss how their respective traditions and teachings promote peace. Efforts to become active for peace at the local level are encouraged. This forum is free of charge. 6.30pm - 9.00pm, Mitchell Theatre, Sydney Mechanics School of the Arts, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney. Telephone: (02) 9708 1539. Web: <http://www.alghazzali.org>

11 APRIL. POLITICS IN THE PUB: 'RUDD'S FIRST 100 DAYS- HOW IS IT LOOKING?' (NSW). Bob Howard, Research Associate, Dept of Govt and International Relations at the University of Sydney, and Steve Keen, Associate Professor, University of Western Sydney and the author of *Debunking Economics: The Naked Emperor of*

the Social Sciences will consider the progress and reforms of the Rudd Federal Government. 6.00 - 7.45pm, Gaelic Club, 64 Devonshire Street, Surry Hills, Sydney. Telephone: (02) 9358 4834. Web: <http://www.politicsinthepub.org>

12 APRIL. NATIONAL WALK FOR VALUES 2008 (NATIONAL). These walks are organised by the Sathya Sai Organisation of Australia & PNG. Web: <http://www.nationalwalkforvalues.org/>
BRISBANE: QUT Parklands, North Side of Goodwill Bridge. Registration and assembly from 9am; walk begins at 10am. Details: enquiry@nationalwalkforvalues.org or 0431 747 598.
MELBOURNE: The Lady Janet Clarke Memorial, Linlithgow Avenue, Melbourne (off St Kilda Rd). Registration from 9:30am; assembly from 10:30am; walk begins at 11am. Details: enquiry@nationalwalkforvalues.org or 0431 187 137.

CANBERRA: The High Court Lawn, Parkes Place, Parkes. Registration and assembly from 9am; walk inauguration and launch from 9:45am; walk begins at 10am. Details: enquiry@nationalwalkforvalues.org or 0402 088 576.
SYDNEY: Prince Alfred Park, Parramatta. Registration from 7:30am; walk begins at 9:25am from Marsden Street. Details: enquiry@nationalwalkforvalues.org or 0416 836 059.

ADELAIDE: Victoria Square. Registration and assembly from 9:45am; walk begins at 10:30am. Details: enquiry@nationalwalkforvalues.org or 0432 983 950.

PERTH: WA State Library, James Street, Northbridge. Registration and assembly from 11:30am; walk begins at 12pm. Details: enquiry@nationalwalkforvalues.org or 0407 335 082

13 APRIL. OXFAM WALK AGAINST WANT (ACT). Walk around Lake Burley Griffin and show your support for Oxfam Australia's work in developing communities. The walk will finish back at Commonwealth Park with food, drinks and entertainment to make it an event the whole family can enjoy. Walk begins at 10.00 from Commonwealth Park. Registration essential. Telephone: 0434 200 794; Email: mai@youthcoalition.net. Web: <http://www.oxfam.org.au/events/>

15 - 19 APRIL. SOULINTHECITY (ACT). Four days of local mission partnering hundreds of youth & 20s with local churches in a fresh style of mission to the nation's capital. Including afternoon projects interacting with local communities, plus FREE evening rallies for stories & teaching, ending with a celebration Justice Concert. Endorsed by ACT Churches' Council. Telephone: (02) 6255 6927; Email: info@soulinthecity.org.au. Web: www.soulinthecity.org.au

17 APRIL. BOOK LAUNCH, 'A RIVER DREAMING' (VIC). Eliabeth Pyke's book 'A River Dreaming' is closely linked to her own personal story of dislocation from culture and loss of identity. Elizabeth is an Elder and Writer in residence at the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry and the book will be launched by Graeme Mundine from 6.00 pm at the Australian Catholic University, 115 Victoria Parade, Fitzroy. RSVP by April 10 to cfar@passiton.org.au or (03) 9480 3849.

17 APRIL. BLAKE DAWSON PUBLIC LECTURE: 'MEMORIES LOST & FOUND: A RECESSION WE HAVE TO HAVE & WHAT THEN?' (ACT). In this lecture, Professor R.G. Gregory, Professor of Economics at the Research School of Social Sciences, ANU, will look back over the period of the Hawke, Keating and Howard governments and discuss what has been learned and what has been forgotten. It offers conjectures on likely economic outcomes during the first term of the Rudd government. Issues canvassed will include monetary policy, inflation, labour market reforms and their outcomes and the changing overlap between the labour market and the welfare system. 6:00pm - 7:00pm, The Shine Dome, Gordon Street, Canberra. Registration is essential. Please contact Blake Dawson Events on 1300 136 612 or canberra.events@bd.com. Web: http://billboard.anu.edu.au/event_view.asp?id=26050

18 APRIL. POLITICS IN THE PUB: 'AFGHANISTAN- AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE?' (NSW). Speakers include Amin Saikal AM, Professor of Political Science and Director of the Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies (The Middle East and Central Asia) at the ANU, and Phil Glendenning, the Director of the Edmund Rice Institute, who has recently returned from his visit to Afghanistan. 6:00-7:45pm, Gaelic Club, 64 Devonshire

Street, Surry Hills, Sydney. Telephone: (02) 9358 4834. Web: <http://www.politicsinthepub.org>

18 APRIL. INAUGURAL PASTOR CEC GRANT LECTURE (ACT). Rev Ray Minniecon will deliver the inaugural lecture on the topic, 'Colonisation, Christianity and Aboriginal Peoples, the Word of God and Traditional Culture in Australia'. The lecture commences at 7.00pm. Before that, there will be a story-telling with the Wiradjuri at 4.00pm and a barbeque tea from 5.30pm. Events at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, 15 Blackall Street, Barton ACT.

18-19 APRIL. CONFERENCE: 'BEYOND THE NEO-CON MEN: ALTERNATIVES AFTER HOWARD' (NSW). Is neo-conservatism in the history books? And what next for the growing political and social movements - how can they build their power? How do they produce allies, organisations, legitimacy, inspiration, vision? Held on the opening day of the new Government's 2020 summit, this conference, open to all, explores strategy and action for alternative 2020 visions. Fri evening, then all day Sat, at Sydney Mechanics School of Arts, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney. To ensure a place pre-register at: james.goodman@uts.edu.au

22 APRIL. NATIONAL CLOSE THE GAP DAY (NATIONAL). National Close the Gap Day gives Australians the opportunity to come together and show their support for closing the 17-year life expectancy gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and other Australians. This campaign has come a long way in the past 12 months. Organise your own small-scale event to celebrate the gains that have been made and to remind our governments that you expect them to meet their recent commitments to Close the Gap. Web: <http://www.oxfam.org.au/events/close-the-gap-day>

23 APRIL. PUBLIC LECTURE: 'WAR AS CRIME' (QLD). In the past two decades there has been a revival of interest in international criminal law. This renaissance has been stimulated by the wars in Sierra Leone, Cambodia, Afghanistan and Iraq, and the establishment of the world's first permanent international criminal court. This lecture considers a particular, and perhaps idiosyncratic, project within this field: namely, the attempt to criminalise war itself. 5:00 - 6:30pm, University of Queensland Library Conference Room, Level 1,

Building #2 (Duhig Building), St Lucia Campus.
Email: s.kaempf@uq.edu.au. Web: <http://www.polsis.uq.edu.au/index.html?page=57171>

30 APRIL. PUBLIC LECTURE: 'CARING FOR COUNTRY: AN OVERVIEW OF ABORIGINAL LAND MANAGEMENT IN THE TOP END OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY.' (ACT). Owing and managing lands of such significance brings with it many diverse challenges. In the mid 1990s, to better meet these challenges, Aboriginal traditional landowners in the tropical savannah of the NT began to formalise their land and sea management activities through the establishment of the Caring for Country programme or what are commonly referred to as ranger groups. To date the Caring for Country programme has grown to include over 36 groups with up to 400 Aboriginal people employed in land and sea management. This seminar provides an overview of the Caring for Country programme and examines how and why it works, as well as some of the challenges that the programme faces. Presented by Sean Kerins, Research Fellow, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research. 12:30pm - 2:00pm, Humanities Conference Room, First Floor, A.D. Hope Bldg #14 (opposite Chifley Library), The Australian National University, Canberra. Telephone: (02)6125 0587; email: admin.caep@anu.edu.au. Web: <http://www.anu.edu.au/caep/events08.php>

2 MAY. POLITICS IN THE PUB: 'NEW GEOPOLITICAL CHALLENGES- FOOD, OIL, WATER!' (NSW). Speakers include Dr Diarmuid Maguire, Govt and International Relations Dept, University of Sydney, and David Shoebridge, Woolahra Councillor, NSW Greens. 6:00-7:45pm, Gaelic Club, 64 Devonshire Street, Surry Hills, Sydney. Telephone: (02) 9358 4834. Web: <http://www.politicsinthepub.org>

4 MAY. ENTRIES CLOSE AUSTRALIAN REFUGEE FILM FESTIVAL 2008 (NATIONAL). Call for film submissions from Triumphant! International for Australia's 2nd Annual Refugee Film Festival. Film submissions should be no longer than 10 minutes in length and should be submitted in DVD format. Entrants are encouraged to submit a written transcript of the film in English so that films can be translated into other languages for the benefit of refugee communities. The festival will take place on the evening of Thursday 19 June at the Pitt St Congregation Uniting Church in Sydney. The film festival will screen as part of 2008 National Refugee Week and further screenings will take place around Australia. Web: <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/newsevents/index.html>.

9 MAY. APPLICATIONS CLOSE FOR THE 2008 YOUTH OFF THE STREETS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM (NATIONAL). The Youth Off The Streets Scholarship Program celebrates the gifts and strengths of young people from the Australian community who exhibit determination and potential but who lack the personal support networks and resources that will allow them to fulfil that potential. The Program provides young people with scholarships of \$5,000 each to pursue further education, training or development so that they may realise their dreams for a positive future. Nominees for the Youth Off The Streets Scholarship Program are not restricted to a specific field of study or training path. Applicants must be aged between 14 and 21 on 9 May 2008. Nomination forms and further information can be downloaded from the website. Contact the Scholarship Program Manager on (02) 8332 5000 or katef@youthoffthestreets.com.au. Web: <http://www.youthoffthestreets.com.au/scholarship/index.html>

Australian Bishops welcome Kenyan peace deal

Australia's Catholic Bishops welcomed a political agreement reached in Kenya and hope it will help achieve reconciliation and forge a just and lasting peace.

Children a priority says CSS

Executive Director of Catholic Social Services Australia Frank Quinlan called on the new Attorney-General to revisit recent changes to family law which put many children of separated parents at risk of avoidable psychological distress.

Street angel our own Mother Teresa

A book which tells the story of Sr Pauline Fitz-Walter SGS - "our own Mother Teresa" - was launched in Sydney.

Vinnies says families facing mounting pressures

The St Vincent de Paul Society raised concerns about the "crippling impact" of mounting pressures on Australian families.

Church celebrates contribution of women

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Office for the Participation of Women celebrated International Women's Day with a special Mass and lunch at the ACBC secretariat in Canberra.

Catholic social agencies in Victoria mark coming year

Victoria's Catholic social service agencies met for their annual gathering yesterday to formally commission their work for the coming year.

Mercy Sister's UN plea for child rapist

A Sydney Sister of Mercy persuaded the United Nations to take up the case of a serial child rapist, the first sex offender to be kept in jail under the NSW "lock them up for good" law.

New papal plea on Iraq slaughter

Pope Benedict denounced the war in Iraq and issued one of his strongest appeals for peace after the death of kidnapped Chaldean Catholic Archbishop Paulos Faraj Rahho.

Catholic official to visit Christmas Island

The Director of the Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office Monsignor John Murphy will visit the Christmas Island Detention Centre during a pastoral visit to the island.

Peaceful solutions required to safeguard Common Good: Pope

Addressing pilgrims in his traditional "Urbi et Orbi" Easter message, Pope Benedict launched a new appeal for peace in the "tormented Middle East" as well as Darfur, Somalia and Tibet.

Rome-bound Ncube admits adultery, slams Mugabe

In a tearful television interview recorded just before his departure for Rome, retired Zimbabwe Archbishop Pius Ncube admitted adultery but also spoken out strongly against abuses by the Mugabe government.

Missionaries better than government: Yunupingu

Arguing that missionaries looked after Aboriginal children "better than the government", Northern Territory indigenous leader, Galarrwuy Yunupingu called for "missionary-style dormitories" where children could be fed, clothed and cleaned.

ACU beats retailers on maternity leave

National shopping chains Myer and ALDI announced the introduction of six to fourteen weeks paid maternity leave for their staff, still far below the benchmark of one year's paid leave offered by Australian Catholic University.

Malone says it is time to strike for Earth Hour

Maitland-Newcastle Bishop Michael Malone urged all members of the Catholic community to get behind tomorrow's Earth Hour lights off.

- Courtesy CathNews from Church Resources.
Click on story titles for more detail, or go to <http://cathnews.com>



Social Justice Calendar

2 Wed Death of Pope John Paul II, 2005

5 Sat National Youth Week begins. Theme: Shout. Share. Live. Unite.

6 Sun 3rd Sunday of Easter

7 Mon World Health Day

10 Thu 120 nations sign treaty banning biological warfare, 1972
Belfast Agreement signed Northern Ireland, 1998

12 Sat In 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%

13 Sun 4th Sunday of Easter
World Day of Prayer for Vocations

14 Mon 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 Tue Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Royal Commission Final Report signed, 1991

18 Fri World Heritage Day
International Guide Dogs Day
Albert Einstein died, 1955

19 Sat Pope Benedict XVI elected, 2005

20 Sun 5th Sunday of Easter

22 Tue International Earth Day

23 Wed World Book & Copyright Day

24 Thu First United Nations Conference opens with 45 nations attending, 1945

25 Fri ANZAC Day

26 Sat Bishop Gerardi murdered in Guatemala, 1998

27 Sun 6th Sunday of Easter

28 Mon St Peter Chanel, first martyr from Oceania, killed on Futuna in the New Hebrides in 1841

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 8306 3499)

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Website: <http://socialjustice.catholic.org.au> ACSJC Briefing is sent by email at the beginning of each month (except January). To subscribe or unsubscribe, go to the front page of the website Comments and contributions are also welcome.