



No. 97 – December 2008

*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,

At the end of a busy year the Church enters a new liturgical year with the Season of Advent.

Advent is a time for reflection and taking stock of our lives as we approach the Christmas Season. It is a time of expectation - of listening for the invitation to discover once more the saving presence of God in our lives. And, with the dramatic image of the nativity, we appreciate the great significance of God becoming one of us in the person of Jesus Christ.

The weeks of Advent would help us to receive the true gift of Christmas and to prepare for the year ahead. However, it stands almost prophetically against the busyness and consumerism associated with the coming weeks. The Season offers us the opportunity to stop, listen and receive the meaning of Christmas. But, in fact, our days become more hectic and we are encouraged to spend, spend, spend!

This is not to say there is no place for gifts, festivities and great meals with family and friends. But the mad rush and panic buying does not lend itself to preparing the way of the Lord.

Think of the shopping experience many will have in the weeks before Christmas. Bouts of road rage in full-to-overflowing car parks. Retail staff working absurd hours and forced to endure the never-ending cycle of carols piped through the shopping centre. Entire families on slow moving check-out lines. Children who are pump-primed by advertisers to grasp for the latest and best.

It is sad that media marketing has all but eclipsed the Season of Advent. But the competitive spirit of the market has also distorted the meaning of Christmas. Recently I was picking my daughter up from school and I heard a child ask her father, 'Dad, who do you like best - Jesus or Santa?' Slightly shocked, thinking on his feet and not wanting to deny the existence of 'Santa' in front of the other kids, the father said, 'You know that Jesus gives you a gift that that won't break, that lasts all your life and you can take with you even if you die.' The beautiful thing I noticed in that instant was that the little girl had a look of understanding in her eyes and said 'yes'.

I would like to think that amid the hectic consumerism, the true meaning breaks through - even in brief glimpses. The vivid Gospel stories about the Holy Family have the power to penetrate the hype. Mary, one of the *anawim* - the little people - was chosen to be the Mother of God. Against the convention of the day, Joseph married Mary and became the father of her unborn child. Rejected at the Bethlehem inn, Mary gives birth to her child in a stable. The flight into Egypt, away from the threat of Herod, is another reminder that along with the great joy of Jesus' birth were significant risks, threats and great hardships.

In the rowdiness of the period, these Gospel passages about the Holy Family call us to bear in mind those who are in very difficult circumstances and experiencing loneliness or despair. So, this Advent, we might hold in our thoughts and prayers any families who are struggling. Let us pray: For families struggling financially who may have lost livelihoods and be facing homelessness; For those fleeing war, oppression and famine; For those experiencing the sadness of family breakdown, separation and divorce; For those experiencing ill-health or who have lost loved ones. And for those who have no families. Let us pray.

In particular at this time, I invite you to hold in your prayers Christine and Lee Rush of Corinda Parish in Brisbane. You would be aware that their son Scott, along with Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukamaran, currently faces the death penalty in Indonesia. Let us pray that they will

be spared from a penalty that is so contrary to our understanding of life as a gift from God. Please pray also for Chris and Lee's other son, Dean, who has just undergone surgery and is very ill. Prayers also for Fr Tim Harris and the Corinda-Graceville parish who have been a great support to Chris and Lee through this difficult time. They need our prayers and I ask you to remember them when you go to Mass this Christmas.

Advent is a time for kindness, thinking of others, and serving those in need. May this Advent bring you joy and provide the opportunity for a deep awareness of God being with you and your loved ones.

God bless this Christmas,

John Ferguson



Current Issues / Resources

ACSJC - 'DEATH PENALTY DEBATE MUST RESTORE CONSISTENCY'

The Australian Catholic Social Justice Council has called on Federal Parliament to hasten the debate regarding the death penalty. The ACSJC supports the notice of motion by Chris Hayes MP, Member for Werriwa, for Australia to adopt a stronger and more consistent stance against capital punishment. ACSJC Chairman, Bishop Christopher Saunders, said the parliamentary debate would provide an opportunity for leaders of all political parties to confirm Australia's opposition to capital punishment and to renew efforts for the universal abolition of the death penalty. 'The ACSJC holds that a strong, principled rejection of capital punishment anywhere in the world - regardless of who the accused is or the nature of their crime - would improve Australia's ability to protect and represent Australian citizens who are exposed to the death penalty overseas.'

'We believe that the values upon which capital punishment is to be opposed are such that no exceptions should be made at home or abroad. Australia's opposition to the death penalty cannot end at our national borders,' Bishop Saunders said. Web: http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/Content/media_releases/2008_11_24_10567891111.html

EDMUND RICE CENTRE - ONLINE PETITION

Following the screening of *A Well-Founded Fear* on SBS, Edmund Rice Centre director, Phil Glendenning has called today called for Australians to make known to the Federal Government, their support for the process of reform of the Howard Government's immigration regime and its inhuman treatment of asylum seekers. Responding to the calls for action Mr Glendenning said: 'There are three ways people can help. The first and simplest thing is to sign the online petition on

the Edmund Rice Centre's website. Secondly, you need to write to your Federal MP and to Senator Evans, calling for an urgent reopening of the cases of the asylum seekers removed to danger from Nauru. Australians urgently need to encourage the Government to continue with immigration reforms. Finally, this work is desperately difficult to resource and yet urgently needs to continue. If you are able to support this work, please donate via the Edmund Rice Centre website www.erc.org.au/donate or mail a cheque to the Centre.' Phone: (02) 8762 4200. Web: www.erc.org.au

CARITAS AUSTRALIA - CONGO APPEAL

Caritas has begun distributing food rations in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo to 64,000 people who have fled their homes to escape escalating violence. Hundreds of thousands of people face hunger, disease and brutality as rebel forces work their way across North Kivu, bringing with them a wave of killing, rape and destruction. The appeal will assist 15,000 vulnerable displaced families (around 90,000 people). This appeal will fund emergency non-food items to the affected to ensure that they regain their dignity and livelihoods. To donate please call 1800 024 413 or GPO Box 9830 in your capital city, or donate online. Web: http://www.caritas.org.au/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Media_releases&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&CONTENTID=4717&zbrandid=2035&zidType=CH&zid=269691&zsubscriberId=500470746

EUREKA STREET ARTICLE ON WORKCHOICES

Dr Tim Battin assesses the Government's new workplace legislation in his article 'Neoliberal termites unbalance Fair Work Bill'. He says, "In the Rudd Government's attempt to 'sell' the Fair Work Bill currently before the parliament, ministers have relied on an appeal to a middle ground. Employers haven't got everything they wanted, we are told, and neither have the unions. So the Bill must be about right ... right?" To find out more, read the article at: <http://www.eurekastreet.com.au/article.aspx?aeid=10395>

INFORMATION KIT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has issued an information kit for 2008 Human Rights Day to be observed

on 10 December. This resource is helpful for events and activities to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The kit includes: information notes: a summary of events that took place around the world throughout 2008 to mark the 60th anniversary; information on the "Stories on Human Rights" films; background information on the Human Rights Prize; useful contacts; and information on human rights education. The English version of the Information Kit is already posted on the web: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Pages/60UDHRIntroduction.aspx>

ACRATH WEBSITE - A SITE AGAINST TRAFFICKING

Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH) have launched their website. The site provides resources and information as well as suggestions for action and advocacy. The website says, 'Slavery exists today. It's right here among us and happening under our noses. That's right - Australia is a destination for trafficked people who are used for a variety of purposes! We want to give them a voice. This site seeks to tell their stories so that society here can make a stand against such human rights abuses. We want to give you a voice too. This site seeks to allow users to discuss and actively respond to the crisis that is human trafficking and slavery in our country and region.' Visit the website at: <http://www.acrath.org/home.php>

JUST ACT WEBSITE - 'JUST END CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION'

The Justice and International Mission Unit of the Uniting Church in Victoria and Tasmania runs a website promoting ways to work towards transforming situations of injustice in local communities, across our country and throughout the world. JustEndPersecution is for people who want to link prayer with action to respond to incidents of persecution and human rights abuses inflicted on Christians around the globe. The website is currently urging action to address a wave of violent attacks by Hindu nationalist extremists against the minority Christian population in Orissa State in North India. Background information and suggestions for action can be found at: <http://www.justact.org.au/just-end-christian-persecution/just-take-action/>

BISHOP CALLS FOR HALT TO WA GAS HUB

Indigenous groups have not been adequately consulted on the development of a gas processing hub on Western Australia's Dampier Peninsula, says Bishop Christopher Saunders. ABC News reports Bishop Saunders has backed statements by Indigenous groups and environmentalists that public consultation over the project has not been wide ranging. Bishop Saunders said that Aboriginal people on the peninsula have told him they regret going along with the proposal in the past. "It would worry me if we committed another atrocity, and this would be an atrocity of economic exploitation," he said. (refer: <http://www.cathnews.com/article.aspx?aeid=10173>)

2008 HUMAN RIGHTS MEDALS AND AWARDS

The President of the Australian Human Rights Commission, the Hon. Catherine Branson QC, has announced the shortlisted entries for the 2008 Human Rights Medals and Awards. The awards are held annually to coincide with International Human Rights Day on 10th December. This year's awards ceremony also celebrates the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights passed by the United Nations in 1948. The shortlist for each award category (excluding the Human Rights Medal and the Young People's Human Rights Medal) are available on the Commission's website at: www.humanrights.gov.au/hr_awards.

PUBLICATION - 'HUMAN RIGHTS OVERBOARD'

In 2005, in the wake of the Cornelia Rau scandal, a citizen's inquiry was established to bear witness to events in Australia's immigration-detention facilities. Until then, the federal government had refused to conduct a broad-ranging investigation into immigration detention, and the operations within detention centres had been largely shrouded in official secrecy. The Inquiry heard heartbreaking evidence about asylum-seekers' journeys to Australia, their refugee determination process, and their life in and

after detention. Authors Linda Briskman & Susie Latham & Chris Goddard have drawn together the oral testimony and written submissions from the inquiry in *Human Rights Overboard*, which stands as an indictment of Australia's refugee policy. Cost: \$35. (refer: <http://www.scribepublications.com.au/book/humanrightsoverboard>)

PUBLICATION - 'BLIND CONSCIENCE'

A book by *Lateline* journalist Margot O'Neill reveals the untold story of people who struggled to get asylum seekers out of detention and change government policy. Margot paints a compelling and heartbreaking picture through an extraordinary cast of characters. Some, like Petro Georgiou, Julian Burnside and Phillip Ruddock, are very well-known. Others are not famous but simply felt compelled to follow their consciences and act to help desperate people in desperate situations, often to the detriment of their personal well-being. Cost: \$34.95 (refer: <http://www.unswpress.com.au/isbn/0868408530.htm>)

PUBLICATION - 'HOLDING MEN'

Dr Brian McCoy SJ has lived and worked with Indigenous communities, mostly in the Western Desert, for 40 years. From this commitment and his PhD research into the health and well-being of Aboriginal men, comes the book entitled *Holding Men: Kanyirninpa and the health of Aboriginal Men*. Fr McCoy explores issues of masculinity, of grief, of illness, and how these relate to *kanyirninpa* (holding, nurturing, teaching, growing-up, respect). It is a book about an ancient culture and its people, trying in their own way, to survive in 21st century Australia. Rigorously researched yet simply written, it challenges us with human stories of heart-breaking enormity whilst reflecting a quiet hope in resilience and healing of *kanyirninpa*. Cost: \$34.95. (refer: <http://www.eurekastreet.com.au/article.aspx?aeid=9883>)

Latest Publications

(Orders: phone (02) 8306 3499 or download an order form from the ACSJC website [that can be faxed to (02) 8306 3498]: <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/CONTENT/PDF/TEMPLATE-ORDERFORM.pdf>)

SERIES PAPER - 'A GOD MERCIFUL AND GRACIOUS'.

In Catholic Social Justice Series No.64, Old Testament scholar Mark O'Brien invites readers to consider the roots of our modern concepts of justice and mercy. The Old Testament's account of justice is often regarded as full of God's anger and vengeance. Fr O'Brien considers the challenges and obligations faced at the time: the challenge to establish a coherent law and theology, the constant threat of violence from neighbouring superpowers, God's covenant with his people, rivals to the covenant, and the prophetic contribution reintegrating justice and mercy into the life of the community. (\$6.60 a copy, plus postage - postage rates listed below)

ORDER NOW! - 2008 SOCIAL JUSTICE DIARY

The 2009 Social Justice Diary includes the dates of significant events, anniversaries and special days which celebrate particular aspects of social justice. It highlights the theme of young people and justice today. The Diary 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 - 'TOWARDS A MORE JUST WORLD'.

Duncan MacLaren examines how the Church can confront new problems concerning social justice and human rights. The paper explains how Catholic social teaching and its basis in the Gospels makes Catholic NGOs different from other agencies. It also suggests areas where Catholic social teaching has to be expanded to address some of the deep-seated

problems of the modern world. (\$6.60 a copy, plus postage - postage rates listed below)

SERIES PAPER - 'PALESTINE AND ISRAEL'.

In Catholic Social Justice Series No.62, journalist and author Peter Manning provides a comprehensive analysis of the issues behind the Middle East conflict. His detailed examination of the key causes of the conflict helps readers understand the reasons for the impasse. (\$6.60 a copy, plus postage - postage rates listed below)

2008 SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY STATEMENT

- ORDERS STILL BEING TAKEN. This year's Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Social Justice Sunday Statement is entitled 'A Rich Young Nation: The challenge of affluence and poverty in Australia'. The ACSJC is taking orders for the Statement. An order form is available on the ACSJC website. The easiest way to order is to download the order form, make a credit card payment and fax it to (02) 8306 3498. Refer: <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au>

SERIES PAPER - 'CONFRONTING THE DEATH PENALTY'.

Catholic Social Justice Series No.61 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)

(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, fax (02) 8306 3481 or download an order form from the ACSJC website: <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/CONTENT/PDF/TEMPLATE-ORDERFORM.pdf>



This Month's Notices

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER. 'CONSULTATIONS ON THE FUTURE OF AUSTRALIA'S RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM' (National). As part of its annual national consultations, the Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA) is running sessions concerning the functioning of the program and the provision of resettlement services. The RCOA invites people from across Australia to participate in its annual national consultations on the future of Australia's refugee and humanitarian program. These consultations inform RCOA's annual submission to the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship on issues the Australian Government should consider in planning the coming year's refugee program. This is an opportunity to share your thoughts, suggestions and concerns. If you would like to contribute ideas or find out details of the consultation process, please contact RCOA on (02) 9211 9333 or via info@refugeecouncil.org.au. Visit the website to find out the details of consultations being run in your area: <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/resources/consultations.html>.

1 DECEMBER. PUBLIC FORUM, 'TIBET: A NEW ROADMAP TO RESOLUTION' (VIC). Dr Lobsang Sangsay of Harvard Law School and Professor Baogang He of Deakin University will discuss Sino-Tibet relations and outline a path to the resolution of the Tibet issue. Hosted by the Human Rights Forum of the University of Melbourne. 6.30 - 7.30pm, Lecture Theatre E, Old Arts (Building No. 149), University of Melbourne. For further information contact s.bradshaw@atc.org.au. Web: <http://www.law.monash.edu.au/castancentre/events/>

2 DECEMBER. WORKSHOP: 'TRAUMA AND THE MATTER OF FORGIVENESS' (NSW). Robert Grant, Director of Organisational Health and Development at The International Trauma Centre at St. John of God Health Care, will run this workshop for therapists, physicians, pastoral counsellors, spiritual directors and chaplains who work with victims and/or perpetrators of abuse. He will examine the journey that many victims of abuse and

trauma embark on in relation to healing and forgiveness. Cost: \$250. 9.00 am - 5.00 pm, The Education Centre, St John of God Hospital, 13 Grantham St, Burwood. RSVP on (02) 9715 9212.

2 DECEMBER. CHRISTIAN-JEWISH DIALOGUE (ACT). The ACT Christian-Jewish dialogue group will be holding a forum on the topic of 'The genesis of power politics & relationships'. Rabbi Ralph Genende will be speaking. 8.00pm at the Jewish Centre, National Circuit, Forrest. There will be a request for a gold coin donation, and supper will be provided.

2 DECEMBER. SPORT AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY FORUM (NSW). The Australian Human Rights Commission will be holding this forum which aims to build on the findings and recommendations of the Commission's 'What's the Score' Report of 2007. Recent policy developments, initiatives and innovations to adapt to the growing cultural diversity of sporting participants in Australia and the issues around social inclusion and sport will be discussed. 1.30 - 3.30pm, Moot Court 5B.102 - Law Faculty, University of Technology Sydney (Haymarket Campus, Cnr Quay Street & Ultimo Road, Haymarket). For more information about the forum or RSVP, please email amy.lamoin@humanrights.gov.au

3 DECEMBER. SEMINAR, 'ACEH: LESSON AND EXPERIENCE FROM THE TSUNAMI AND CONFLICT' (NSW). This one day seminar being organised by Indonesian Solidarity will address the social impacts and the reconstruction process after the tsunami and the political development after the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Free Aceh Movement and the Indonesian government. Has peace in Aceh brought justice? Speakers include: Mr Afridal Darmi of the Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation in Aceh; Mr Nurdin Abdul Rachmand, president of the association of heads of districts and mayors in Aceh; Ms Antje Missbach, PhD candidate at the ANU; Dr Ingvar Anda of Caritas Australia.

9.00am - 5.00pm, Quadrangle History Room (S223), The University of Sydney. For further information contact (02) 92173874 or indonesian_solidarity@yahoo.com.au

3 DECEMBER. PUBLIC FORUM, 'KICKING GOALS - CHANGING LIVES' (VIC). This event hosted by Future Leaders, the City of Melbourne and the Melbourne 2008 Homeless World Cup will engage in discussion with young people about street soccer, crime, homelessness, poverty, achievement against the odds and how young people can make a difference in the world. Panellists: Mr Dan Adams, Make Poverty History; Mr Emmanuel Bismy, child soldier from Sierra Leone and Reach Ambassador; Mr Tom Hurley, year 10 student who volunteers to teach young African children English; and Ms Sarah McLardy, year 11 student, Reach Ambassador, Board Member of the Mali Initiative. Moderator: Ms Tracee Hutchison, writer, broadcaster, reporter. 10.00 - 11.00am, BMW Edge at Federation Square, Melbourne. Web: <http://www.law.monash.edu.au/castancentre/events/>

4 - 5 DECEMBER. FULL EMPLOYMENT CONFERENCE (NSW). The 10th Path to Full Employment Conference and the 15th National Conference on Unemployment will be held at the University of Newcastle from 4 to 5 December. This is also the 10th Anniversary of CoffEE which hosts the Conference. The theme of the conference is 'Labour underutilisation, skill shortages, and social inclusion - three sides of the same coin'. For further information about keynote speakers, conference venue and registration, visit <http://e1.newcastle.edu.au/coffee/conferences/2008/> or call (02) 4921 7283.

4 - 7 DECEMBER. HUMAN RIGHTS ARTS & FILM FESTIVAL (NSW). A selection including Make Poverty History's *Reel Change* to the *Screen Dreaming* shorts, international films from Germany, Korea and Israel, and an intimate portrait of the Dalai Lama's life and work. For screening and event details and further information, visit: <http://www.hraff.org.au/sydney.html>

7 DECEMBER. LECTURE, 'TIMOR LESTE, WAR CRIMES, GOVERNMENT INACTION' (NSW). The 5th Annual Dr Andrew McNaughtan Memorial Lecture is being hosted by the Australia-East Timor Association (NSW). Speakers include: Ms Ceu Federer, CEO Timor Aid; James Thomas, journalist Today-Tonight/Channel 7; John Maynard, producer of 'Balibo'; and, Jean Berlie of the Asian Studies Department of the Hong Kong University. \$10/7 donation to the Dr Andrew McNaughtan East Timor Education Foundation. 4.00 - 6.00pm, Gleebooks, 49 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe. For further information contact (02) 9569 6070. To RSVP call (02) 9660 2333.

8 DECEMBER. PUBLIC FORUM, TRANSFORMING EDUCATION (NSW). The Australian Catholic University's Institute for Advancing Community Engagement is hosting the public forum - *Transforming Education: A Right for People, Communities and Nations* - to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The speakers are Adjunct Professors Chris Sidoti and Anne Benjamin of the ACU, and Dawn Casey, Director of the Powerhouse Museum. 6.00pm, Loyola Senior High School, 91 North Pde, Mt Druitt. RSVP on (02) 9701 4176 or iace@acu.edu.au

9 DECEMBER. PUBLIC FORUM, 'GETTING SERIOUS ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE' (NSW). The Labor Environment Activist Network is holding an end of year event at which Carmel Tebbutt MP, Deputy Premier & Minister for Climate Change and the Environment, will address the matter 'Getting Serious About Climate Change: The role of state government. 5.30 - 7.30pm, First Floor, Burdekin Hotel, 2 Oxford St, Darlinghurst. RSVP by Friday 5 December to: leannsw@gmail.com or 0410 324 942.

9 DECEMBER. PUBLIC LECTURE, 'GETTING INTO GEAR FOR THE NEXT 60 YEARS' (NSW). To celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the 30th anniversary of the Evatt Foundation, the Evatt Foundation and the University of Sydney take pleasure in inviting you to an address by the current Member for Barton and Attorney-General, The Hon. Robert McClelland MP. The Inaugural Evatt Annual Lecture will

be free. 6.30 - 7.30pm, the Eastern Avenue Auditorium, University of Sydney. RSVPs are helpful but not essential: please contact the Evatt Office on (02) 8090 1170 or visit www.evatt.org.au for further information. Web: http://www.sydneymsa.com.au/index.php?option=com_eventlist&Itemid=39&func=details&did=143

10 DECEMBER. PUBLIC LECTURE, 'HUMAN RIGHTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE' (VIC). The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission is holding the 8th Annual Human Rights Oration. The Hon Rob Hulls, Attorney General will make an opening address. Dan Adams, Board Member of the Oaktree Foundation will deliver the oration on the topic of 'Human rights and climate change: Protecting the rights of future generations'. This is a free event. 12.30 - 1.30pm (followed by light lunch), ZINC at Federation Square, Cnr Flinders & Swanston Streets, Melbourne. Registration required by 3 December to liam.fitzgerald@veohrc.vic.gov.au or (03) 9281 7110. Web: <http://www.law.monash.edu.au/castancentre/events/>

10 DECEMBER. LUNCHEON, '2008 HUMAN RIGHTS AWARDS' (NSW). The awards are held annually to coincide with International Human Rights Day. This year's awards ceremony also celebrates the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights passed by the United Nations in 1948. Winners and highly commended entries will be announced and presented at a gala luncheon ceremony at the Grand Ballroom, Sheraton on the Park Hotel in Sydney from 12.00noon - 3.00pm. Julian Morrow will be MC. Tickets: \$65 or \$40 concession for a two-course luncheon, drinks and entertainment. Reservations can be made at (02) 9284 9618 or www.humanrights.gov.au/hr_awards/tickets.html

10 DECEMBER. HUMAN RIGHTS LECTURE (NSW). Marking the 60th anniversary of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, the Australian Human Rights Centre and the Initiative for Health and Human Rights and the Diplomacy Training is hosting this event. Lord Bingham, leading human rights jurist and former Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales and Elizabeth Evatt, former member

of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and UN Human Rights Committee will speak. 10.30am - 12.00noon at the Law Theatre, Law Building, University of New South Wales, Kensington Campus, Sydney. For further info contact ahrcenter@unsw.edu.au. Web: <http://www.ahrcentre.org/content/Activites/AHRCEvents.html>

11 DECEMBER. SEMINAR, 'HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITY AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS: WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES A HUMAN RIGHTS ACT MAKE?' (NSW). The Australian Human Rights Commission is hosting the fifth of its seminar series celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Lord Bingham of Cornhill, pre-eminent human rights jurist and former Senior Law Lord of the House of Lords, will deliver this address. 12.30 - 2.00pm, The Hearing Room, Level 8, Australian Human Rights Commission, Piccadilly Tower, 133 Castlereagh St Sydney. Places are limited. RSVP to associate@humanrights.gov.au

14 DECEMBER. INTERFAITH GATHERING, 'HEALING OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ENVIRONMENT' (ACT). This gathering is being convened by Interfaith Forum ACT in association with United Ngunawal Elders Council, ACT Indigenous Community and ACT Palliative Care Society Inc. There will be Welcome to Country, readings or stories from spiritual traditions and musical interludes. 2.30 - 4.30pm in Grevillea Park. Please park in the lower end of Menindee Drive. Web: <http://iffact/tripod.com>

18 DECEMBER. MARIST YOUTH CARE 'CHARITY GOLF DAY' (NSW). The fourth annual Charity Golf Day will raise much-needed funds for a wide variety of projects which assist 'at risk' young people living within the community. This year proceeds from the Charity Golf Day will go towards setting up a much-needed Specialist Alcohol and Drug Intervention Service for 'at risk' young people aged 14-18 years living in Sydney's West. RSVP by 1 December. Cost: \$140 per player - includes 18 holes of golf, pre match refreshments and BBQ Dinner. Venue: Ryde Parramatta Golf Club, 1156 Victoria Road, West

Ryde, Sydney. For further information contact 0400 340 564 or pauliner@maristyc.com.au.
Web: <http://www.maristyc.com.au/index.htm>

14 - 16, 19 - 20 JANUARY. CIS SUMMER SCHOOLS 2009 (NSW). The Catholic Institute of Sydney is running summer school programs, including the course 'Introducing Islam', which will provide students with the historical

background and information necessary for understanding the complex cross-currents of Christian-Muslim Relations in contemporary society. Registration and payment need to be made by 5 December. Courses will be held at CIS, 99 Albert Road, Strathfield. For further information on the courses on offer, contact (02) 9746 6022 or cisinfo@cis.catholic.edu.au. Web: <http://www.cis.catholic.edu.au/SummerSchools.htm>

News Monitor

Green Bible published

A new environmental edition of the Bible was published in the US using soy inks on recycled paper and featuring a foreword by Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Marx writes to Marx

In the first chapter of his new book, German Archbishop Reinhard Marx addressed a letter to his nineteenth century namesake the communist founder, Karl Marx.

Pope's first "green audience"

Pope Benedict held his first "ecological audience", *L'Osservatore Romano*, as the Vatican flipped the switch on its massive electricity generating solar panels.

Service providers seek help

Major church providers called for a crisis and recovery fund from the Australian Government to ensure people who are doing it tough due to the impact of the global financial crisis are not further disadvantaged.

Social service providers lobby Canberra

Catholic Social Services and other faith based social service organisations presented a discussion paper highlighting the expected impact of the global economic crisis on the poorest groups.

ACSJC backs stronger stance against capital punishment

The Australian Catholic Social Justice Council backed a move in Federal Parliament for

Australia to adopt a stronger and more consistent stance against capital punishment.

"Courageous" Liberation Theology needs time: Jesuit General

Describing Liberation Theology as a "courageous" and "creative" response, Jesuit Superior General, Fr. Adolfo Nicolas, said that it needs more time to mature.

Stop children's suffering: Pope

Pope Benedict made a plea for more action to address the poverty, conflicts and neglect that lead to the suffering or death of millions of children around the world.

"New generation" political education a must: Pope

Formation for a new generation of "lay Catholics involved in politics" is urgent and vital, Pope Benedict said.

Asylum seeker exposé draws huge response

An SBS television documentary featuring an Edmund Rice Centre exposé on the treatment of rejected asylum seekers drew a huge response, ERC director Phil Glendenning said.

Breaching laws hit families: CSSA

Harsh social security breaching laws impact on families with up to 50 percent of breached job seekers falling behind in their rent, Catholic Social Services chief Frank Quinlan told a Senate enquiry.

Catholic Healthcare pilots squalor phone hotline

Catholic Healthcare launched a Sydney telephone hotline to coordinate responses to people living in domestic squalor.

ERC backs Palm Island Royal Commission call

The Edmund Rice Centre backed a petition calling for a Royal Commission into the events surrounding the death in custody of Palm Island man Mulrunji Doomadgee.

Bishop Saunders calls for “stay of execution” over WA gas hub

Saying that indigenous groups had not been adequately consulted, Broome Bishop Christopher Saunders called for a “stay of execution” over the development of a gas processing hub on Western Australia’s Dampier Peninsula.

Vatican denounces Congo “massacre of the poor”

Describing recent events in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as a “massacre of the poor”, Vatican spokesman Fr Federico Lombardi called for world support to end the violence and assist refugees.

Human rights “atomised”: Gleeson

Retired High Court Chief Justice Murray Gleeson criticised human rights trends favouring individual liberty and self-expression over family and community values.

Religious groups mobilise on climate change

Indigenous leaders from Australia and the Pacific called on Australia to show leadership on climate change and Australian religious leaders are also mobilising on the issue.

Grech calls for review over Down’s Syndrome visa rejection

ACBC immigration spokesman Bishop Joseph Grech called for a review of immigration procedures following a government decision

to deny a German doctor permanent residency because his son Down’s Syndrome.

Rudd launches Ozanam learning centre

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd opened the new Vinnies sponsored Ozanam Learning Centre in Woolloomooloo, Sydney, which aims to empower and equip homeless people in a transition back to “sustainable independent living”.

Indigenous crisis for boarding schools

Catholic boarding schools catering for indigenous students in Queensland and the Northern Territory may lose up to 30 percent of their grants if legislation currently before Federal Parliament is passed.

Don’t kill Bali bombers: Rush priest

Brisbane priest Fr Tim Harris, who just visited two former parishioners, convicted drug mules, Scott Rush and Michael Czugaj, said that the death penalty is not the answer for drug traffickers or for the Bali bombers.

Congo crisis appeal

Caritas Internationalis launched an appeal for peace and for aid to be delivered to the crisis torn east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Aussie Christian Brother leader to head PNG disability network

The Christian Brothers announced the appointment of their former Western Australian leader, Br Kevin Ryan, as the new director of a national disability services network in Papua New Guinea.

Asia-Pacific Catholic women seek empowerment

Catholic women’s organisations in the Asia-Pacific will focus their energies on empowerment for women, a regional conference in Seoul decided.

- *Courtesy CathNews: click on titles for detail.*



Social Justice Calendar

1 MON

World AIDS Day

2 TUE

International Day for the Abolition of Slavery

3 WED

International Day of Persons with Disabilities
Battle of the Eureka Stockade, 1874

5 FRI

International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development

6 SAT

St Nicholas (Santa Claus)

7 SUN

2nd Sunday of Advent
International Civil Aviation Day

8 MON

Final Session of Vatican Council II, 1965

10 WED

Human Rights Day: Adoption of United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, 1948
Prime Minister Paul Keating's speech to launch International Year of the World's Indigenous People, 1992
Death of Thomas Merton, 1968

14 SUN 3rd Sunday of Advent

18 THU

International Migrants Day
South Australian Parliament was the first in the world to give women the right to vote, 1894

21 SUN

4th Sunday of Advent
Native Title Bill passed by the Senate, 1993
Dissolution of the USSR and the founding of the Commonwealth of Independent States including Russia, 1991

23 TUE

Wik decision, 1996
Immigration Restriction Act (White Australia Policy) enacted, 1901

25 THU

Christmas Day (Solemnity)

28 SUN

Holy Family (Feast)

29 MON

International Day for Biological Diversity

31 WED

Paid annual leave granted to workers in Australia, 1946

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