

Community Education Resource

Social Justice Statement 2013–2014

LAZARUS AT OUR GATE: A CRITICAL MOMENT IN THE FIGHT AGAINST WORLD POVERTY

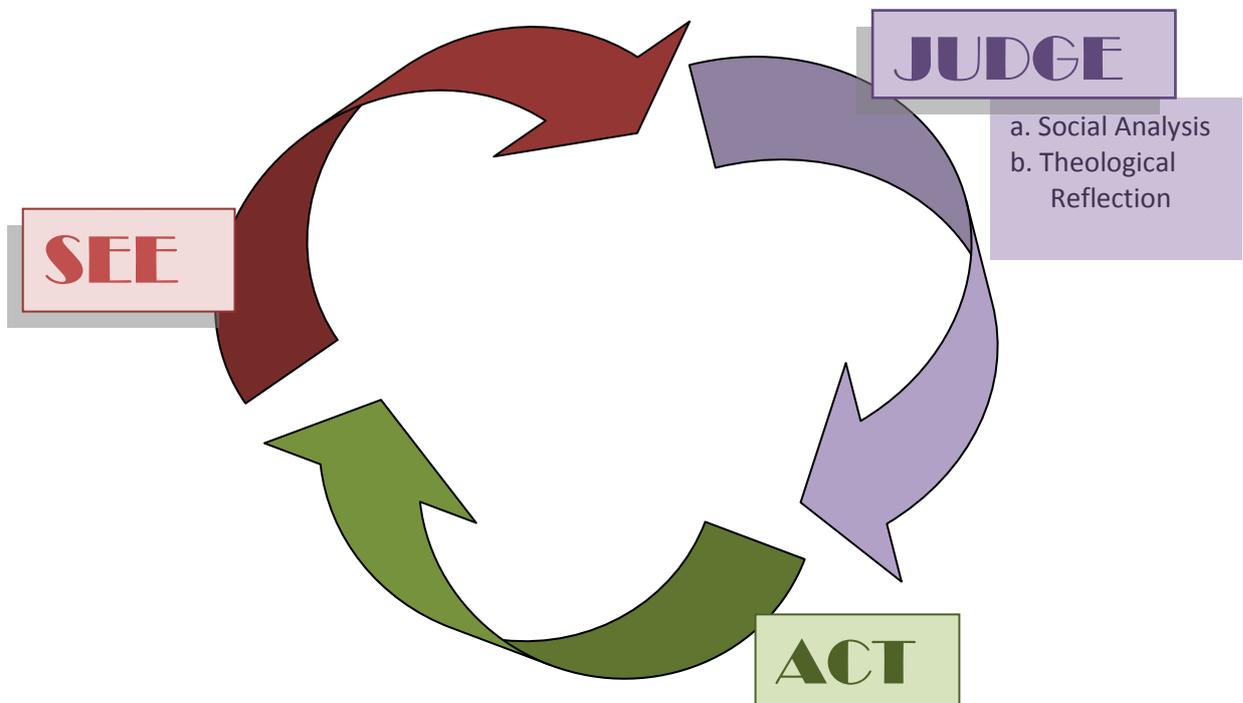
This resource is for social justice groups, YCS groups and senior secondary students. It offers a process to engage with the issue world poverty, based on the Australian Catholic Bishops' Social Justice Statement 2013–2014. In the introduction to the Statement the Bishops say:

"... we are inspired by the compelling call of Jesus himself in his teachings and parables.

We are also conscious that although enormous progress has been made in alleviating poverty throughout the world, there is still a great amount left to achieve. It is estimated that by 2015 almost one billion people will be living on an income of less than \$1.25 a day. Over a quarter of a million women still die in childbirth annually. As many as eight million children die every year from malnutrition and preventable diseases such as diarrhoea, measles and malaria. One in eight of the world's people does not get adequate nutrition. (p. 3)

Using the *See, Judge, Act* process, this resource provides ways to *See* the reality of world poverty, including five groups particularly affected by poverty, and to critique our own attitude to this issue and Australia's responsibility in our region. We can then make an informed judgement on the situation and take action to change what can and should be changed.

For each phase of the process, there are references to the Social Justice Statement and suggestions for further resources and research.





Social Justice Statement 2013-14 References

Introduction page 3

Part 1 'A critical moment', pages 4-5

Part 2 'The faces of poverty', pages 6-11

In the Social Justice Statement the Bishops name the following as concerns:	Resources in the Statement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A critical moment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approaching 2015 • MDGs not fully realised • Poverty in the world • Examples of development 	See notes 1-9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Faces of Poverty <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The hungry people of the world • Disaster affected communities • Indigenous Peoples • People with disabilities • Displaced People 	See notes 10-16 See notes 17-25 See notes 26-29 See notes 30-36 See notes 37-40 See notes 41-44
See for yourself!	Other resources
What is your experience of these issues?	
Select <u>one</u> of these issues that particularly concerns you.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caritas Australia • Catholic Social Services • St Vincent de Paul Society • Disability services • Aus Catholic Migrant & Refugee Office • See web references in the 10 Steps Leaflet
Name the aspects of this issue that concern you.	
Use the notes in the Statement to find out more about it.	
Which organisations address this issue in your state/local area?	
Are there other issues related global poverty that need to be addressed?	
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>After this research, what question or questions do you now have regarding this issue?</i></p>	
<p><i>Take this question to the next stage.</i></p>	

JUDGE

- a. Social Analysis
- b. Theological Reflection

a. Social Analysis helps us to obtain a more complete picture of the social situation by exploring its historical and structural relationships. In this step, we attempt to make sense of the reality that was observed in Step 1. Why does this situation exist? What are the root causes?

Look at and discuss the concern you researched in terms of the following factors.

This deepens our understanding of our experience by asking: 'Which of these areas is this issue really about?'

Economic factors – Production, distribution, patterns of ownership and decisions about property and resources.
 Who owns? Who controls?
 Who pays? Who gets? Why?
 What part do economic factors play in the disadvantage faced by some families?

Political factors: Totality of people's participation in decisions that affect their lives.
 Who decides? For whom do they decide?
 How do decisions get made?
 Who is left out of the process? Why?

Social Factors: How people group to relate to one another – social, class, ethnic, racial or age groups.
 Who is left out?
 Who is included?
 Who is overrepresented?
 Why?

Cultural factors: Sum total of ways of believing, thinking, feeling and acting, which constitutes what people call 'their way of life'
 What values are evident?
 What do people believe in?
 Who influences what people believe?

Religious factors: Religion is the expression of humanity's ultimate concern – the articulation of longings for a centre of meaning and value, for connection with the power of being.
 What religious beliefs or practices support this practice?
 What religious beliefs or practices challenge it?

Historical factors: Past events form the current reality.
 What past events influence this situation today?
 Trace the social and economic forces in your family – e.g., parents' & grandparents' work, wages, housing, education, entertainment ...

By the end of this step, the group will have constructed a wider and deeper picture of the issue or focus. The underlying cause begins to emerge.
For example, is it predominantly a social, political, cultural, economic or religious issue?
In light of the analysis the group renames the issue/question and takes it to the theological reflection

b. Theological Reflection explores the experience and its deeper analysis, in dialogue with the religious tradition. From this conversation we gain new insights and meanings. Two important sources of this tradition are the Scriptures and Catholic Social Teaching.

<p>What Scripture passages can help us to make meaning of this experience?</p> <p>How do the Scriptures enable us to see this reality in a different way?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Quotes in the Statement</p> <p><i>There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. He called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames.' But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony ...'</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Luke 16:19–31)</p>
<p>What does Catholic Social Teaching say about this issue?</p> <p>What key principles from Catholic Social Teaching apply to this situation? For example: human dignity, the common good, human rights, the option for the poor.</p>	<p><i>Likewise it can happen that one country surpasses another in scientific progress, culture and economic development. But this superiority, far from permitting it to rule others unjustly, imposes the obligation to make a greater contribution to the general development of the people.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Pope John XXIII <i>Pacem in Terris</i>, 1963 #88</p> <p><i>'He who has the goods of this world and sees his brother in need and closes his heart to him, how does the love of God abide in him?' Everyone knows that the Fathers of the Church laid down the duty of the rich toward the poor in no uncertain terms. As St. Ambrose put it: 'You are not making a gift of what is yours to the poor man, but you are giving him back what is his. You have been appropriating things that are meant to be for the common use of everyone. The earth belongs to everyone, not to the rich.' These words indicate that the right to private property is not absolute and unconditional. No one may appropriate surplus goods solely for his own private use when others lack the bare necessities of life.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Pope Paul VI <i>Populorum Progressio</i>, 1967 #23</p>
<p>What insights emerged for you?</p>	
<p>What do you see more clearly?</p>	
<p>What ideas for action emerge from your insights?</p>	

From your information [Seeing]

... and analysis and theological reflection [Judging]

... what **ACTION** needs to be taken

- to change the situation?
- to address root causes?

Challenges presented in the statement are:

- The depth and breadth of poverty that still exists in our world calls us to action
- We cannot be at peace, eating our fill, in the knowledge that a sister or brother lies hungry or sick at our gate.
- Greed and indifference divide the world. The chasms fixed between rich and poor were made by us and we can unmake them.
- As Christians we are committed not only to work for the full realisation of human dignity for all people everywhere, but to seek out and remedy the root causes of poverty and injustice.
- We cannot work to change the world by ourselves. We need to work in unity with those around us – and those far from us.
- The consistent calls for justice for members of our own First Nations and for people who come to our shores seeking protection from violence and danger are two immediate challenges Australia must meet.

What challenges emerged for you?

What action can you take? (See the 'Ten steps' below – also available as a leaflet from the ACSJC)

If no action is clear, what additional research is needed?

How would you transform the structures and relationships that produce this situation?

How can you act to empower those who are disadvantaged in this situation?

What practical help can you offer?

How will you evaluate the effectiveness of your action?

Some useful websites:

ACSJC: www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au

Church social teaching: Spring Hill College Theology Library www.shc.edu/library/

Secondary Res. <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/publications/social-justice-statements>

Caritas Australia <http://www.caritas.org.au>

Jubilee Australia <http://www.jubileeaustralia.org>

TEN STEPS TOWARDS SOLIDARITY

Following are Ten Steps – Actions – we can take personally, locally and globally to reduce poverty in the world.

1. Start at home!

It has been said that if you have food in a fridge, clothes in a closet, a bed to sleep in and a roof over your head, you are richer than 75% of the world's population.

(Social Justice Statement 2013–14)

Begin sharing the abundance with which you are blessed by going through your cupboards and gathering up the things you no longer need – maybe even some you think you still need!

Take them to St Vincent de Paul for distribution for others who have less.

2. Buy fair trade products

About 70% of the world's cocoa comes from West Africa. Recent figures estimate that 1.8 million children in West Africa are involved in the industry as cheap labour and some are forced or trafficked. The Fairtrade movement advocates for the purchase, sale and consumption of ethically produced chocolate, and other staples such as coffee, tea, bananas, rice, sugar and nuts. By buying foods that are certified Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance or UTZ Certified, producers ensure their produce is not grown by forced or trafficked labour.

Join the Fairtrade campaign to ensure all chocolate processed in Australia is ethically produced. Look for Fairtrade chocolate, tea, coffee and other foods in your supermarket. If it isn't on the shelves, ask the management to get it.

For more information:

www.fairtrade.com.au

<http://fairtrade.asn.au>

www.wfto.com

www.cadbury.com.au/About-Cadbury/Fairtrade.aspx

3. Support just working conditions

Many people are kept in poverty by unfair trade arrangements. For example, some clothing workers in Bangladesh and elsewhere are forced to work long hours in unsafe and unhealthy conditions for a meagre wage. We benefit and thereby collude in this without knowing because we can buy the clothes they produce at a cheap price. When buying clothes, ask whether they were manufactured under fair working conditions.

To find out about producers and brands promoting fair trade, visit:

<http://www.ethicalclothingaustralia.org.au/consumer/accreditedbrands>

<http://www.fairtraders.org.au/content/fair-traders>

www.FairWear.org.au

Campaigning to see that trade agreements between countries are fair needs to be done collaboratively. Two organisations that do this are AFTINET (Australian Fair Trade and Investment

Network) and Oxfam. For more information and to see how you can support their work go to their websites:

www.aftinet.org.au

www.oxfam.org.au/explore/trade/make-trade-fair

4. Donate

Organisations such as Caritas Australia, devoted to alleviating world poverty, can bring about enormous changes in marginalised communities and are a powerful means of working for justice worldwide. Consider how much you can commit to such organisations.

(Social Justice Statement 2013–14)

Through its development projects, Caritas Australia helps the poorest of the poor become self-sufficient so they don't need to rely on charity. For information and to donate go to:

<http://www.caritas.org.au/donate>

Through their fundraising, Catholic Mission offers formation support to local churches and helps children and communities in need around the world. For more information and to donate go to:

<https://www.catholicmission.org.au/donate>

5. Start work in your parish – learn, form partnerships, reach out

Does your parish have a social justice group? If so, join it; if not, consider starting one. Most dioceses have a social justice office or commission; find out who your diocesan representative is:

www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/about-us/diocesan-contacts

Find out more about Catholic social teaching and issues and campaigns that address the major issues of social justice. Visit the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council website. To stay informed, become an ACSJC subscriber:

www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au

Find out about other organisations or campaigns that address the underlying causes of poverty around the world. For example, Jubilee Australia run campaigns on: third world debt, the 'Robin Hood' tax, corporate mining and 'vulture funds'. To find out more visit:

<http://www.jubileeaustralia.org>

6. Break the cycle of poverty for Indigenous people

There are approximately 370 million Indigenous peoples worldwide. Together they make up around 5% of the world's population, yet they constitute up to 15% of the world's poor and make up 300 million of the world's extremely poor rural population.

(Social Justice Statement 2013–14)

Find out more about the challenges facing Indigenous peoples in Australia and around the world. Visit the Walk As One with Indigenous Peoples campaign and take action for a more just world:

www.caritas.org.au/act/walk-as-one-indigenous-peoplescampaign:

Every part of Australia was/is part of an Aboriginal nation. See

www.aiatsis.gov.au/asp/map.html or
www.abc.net.au/indigenous/map/2012-13

Who are the Aboriginal people in your area?

If there are none there now, what happened to those who used to live there?

What Indigenous language is/was spoken in your area?

What Indigenous cultural activities happen in your area – art, dance, music, literature? Attend a local event as a family.

Read books written by Aboriginal authors.

Watch a film about Indigenous Australians, such as *Rabbit Proof Fence*, *Ten Canoes*, *The Tracker*, *The Sapphires*, *Satellite Boy*.

7. Learn about and support refugees and asylum seekers

There are 45 million people worldwide who have been driven from their homes by war or civil violence. Eighty per cent of refugees are seeking protection in developing countries, making it even harder for those nations to lift themselves out of poverty. For millions, it will be many years before they can find a home again. Some never do.

Australia sees only a tiny proportion of these people. Find out if you or your parish can support organisations that help refugees and asylum seekers in Australia and overseas. Some are:

Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office: <http://www.acmro.catholic.org.au>

Jesuit Refugee Services: <http://www.jrs.org.au>

Edmund Rice Centre: <http://www.erc.org.au>

Refugee Council of Australia: <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au>

8. Disabilities

Disabilities are both a cause and consequence of poverty. People living with a disability make up around 15% of the world's population and about 20% of the very poorest in the world. In both developed and developing societies, disabled people experience stigma, prejudice and discrimination.
(Social Justice Statement 2013–14)

People living in poverty are at higher risk of having a disability, due to a range of factors such as unsafe living conditions and inadequate access to health services. 150 million children suffer from a disability and subsequently face reduced access to schools, health care, recreation and opportunities for work. For more information about Caritas projects with disabled people in other countries:

www.caritas.org.au/learn/global-poverty-issues/disability

9. Learn about Australian aid

According to the UN Millennium Project, '0.7% of rich world GNI [Gross National Income] can provide enough resources to meet Millennium Development Goals'. In 1967, and again in 2002, Australia joined with other developed nations in pledging to commit 0.7 per cent of its GNI to overseas aid. It has never achieved that goal.

(Social Justice Statement 2013–14)

Learn more about Australian aid. Talk to your local federal member about Australia's commitment to 0.7% of GNI. Find out where Australian aid is going and what initiatives it supports:

<http://www.acfid.asn.au>

www.caritas.org.au/act/australian-aid

10. Learn about and support the Millennium Development Goals

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has said that 'the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have been the most successful global anti-poverty push in history.' Among significant achievements is the fact that the number of people living in extreme poverty has halved. However, 1.2 billion people still live in extreme poverty. Steady progress has been made towards equal access of girls and boys to education, but more targeted action is needed in many regions.

These eight MDGs are a global blueprint for breaking the chains of poverty. Their aim? To halve world poverty by the year 2015. To find out more about the MDGs and the post-2015 agenda, visit:

<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals>

<http://www.blueprintforabetterworld.org>

'Ten Steps Towards Solidarity' is also published as a full-colour leaflet available from the ACSJC.