

Community Education Resource

Social Justice Statement 2017–2018

Everyone's Business: Developing an inclusive and sustainable economy

This resource is for parish social justice groups, YCS groups and senior secondary students. It offers a process to engage with issues related to economic justice, based on the Australian Catholic Bishops' Social Justice Statement 2017–2018.

Pope Francis has called for an economic system that places men and women at the very centre – one that meets the needs of all people and is just and sustainable. He denounces economic structures that take a purely utilitarian view of human beings, treating them as mere elements of production, to be thrown away if they are not seen as useful or productive.

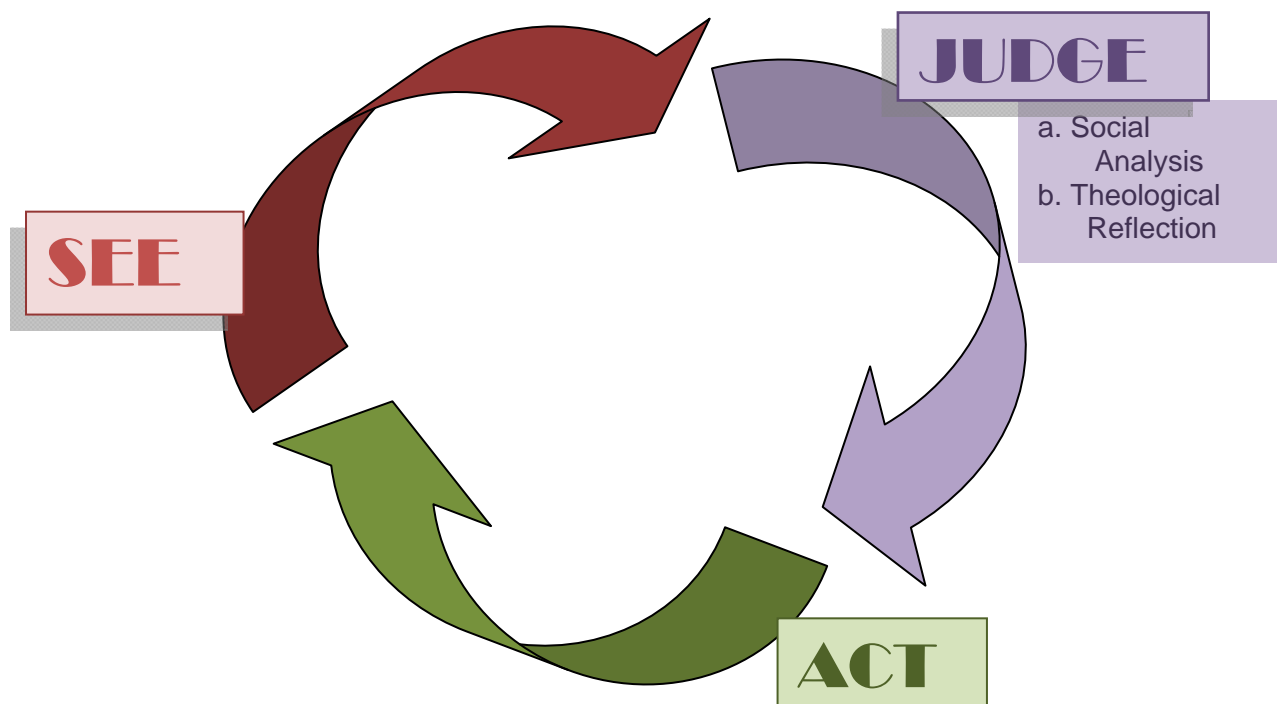
Australia has experienced a quarter of a century of continuous economic growth, but the benefits of this good fortune have not been distributed equally. In many of our workplaces, conditions and security of employment have been eroded, while those who are unemployed subsist on incomes well below poverty levels. Australia is experiencing a housing crisis. And our Indigenous brothers and sisters struggle with economic and social burdens that most Australians cannot imagine.

In the light of these challenges, the Catholic Bishops of Australia call us to build an economy founded on true solidarity with those who are most vulnerable. Such a society will reject an 'ideology of the market' that forgets the principles of justice and equity. Justice must be built into the very foundations of our community, and business can work for everybody's benefit, not just for shareholders. The excluded and vulnerable must have a voice in decision-making. God is calling us to use his bounty wisely, for the good of all and of our planet.

Using the *See, Judge, Act* process, this resource provides ways to see challenges that arise from poverty and a growing wealth divide.

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 References

Introduction page 3

Part 1 Our economy, pp 4–9

Part 2 The call for an inclusive economy, pp 10–15

Part 3 The last will be first, pp 16–18

In the Social Justice Statement the Bishops name the following as concerns:	Resources in the Statement
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our economy – is it working for the vulnerable and the excluded?<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An insecure workforce• Consider those on welfare• The housing and homelessness crisis• The First Australians and the economy• The need for a new approach	See notes 1–11 See notes 12–19 See notes 20–26 See notes 27–34 See notes 35–39 See notes 40 & 41
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The call for an inclusive economy<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The market: to serve or be served?• Our moral compass• Redefining progress: towards inclusive and sustainable development	See notes 42 & 43 See notes 44–48 See notes 49–57 See notes 58–61
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The last will be first	See notes 62 & 63
See for yourself!	Other resources
What is your experience of economic exclusion and poverty in Australia?	For information on poverty and exclusion in Australia, visit:
Select <u>one</u> of the issues that particularly concerns you.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Australian Council of Social Service www.acoss.org.au• Catholic Social Services Australia www.cssa.org.au• The Society of St Vincent de Paul www.vinnies.org.au
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 to the economy that need to be addressed?	See extensive web references to further information in the ACSJC <i>Ten Steps</i> Leaflet
<i>After this research, what question or questions do you now have regarding this issue?</i>	
Take this question to the next stage.	

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 those who are excluded from the mainstream of our society?

Political factors: Totality of people's participation in decisions that affect their lives.

Who decides? For whom do they decide?

How are decisions made – by individuals? local, state and federal governments/agencies?

Who is left out of the process? How does this happen? 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'

Values – what is important/ Beliefs – what is held to be true/ Attitudes – thoughts, words and actions influenced by beliefs

What values are evident?

What do people believe in?

What attitudes do you see expressed?

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?

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>Reflect on how the key Scriptural passage of the Statement can help us to make meaning of this experience?</p> <p>How does this Gospel reading enable us to see this reality in a different way?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">From the Statement</p> <p><i>Jesus said to his disciples: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner going out at daybreak to hire workers for his vineyard. He made an agreement with the workers for one denarius a day, and sent them into his vineyard. Going out at about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the market place and said to them, ‘You go to my vineyard too and I will give you a fair wage.’</i></p> <p>...</p> <p>Reflect on the full parable (Matthew 20:1-16) – the Gospel reading for Social Justice Sunday 2017</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>Globally, the Popes of the past 120 years and more have spoken out strongly for the poor and dispossessed, particularly in periods of major social and economic upheaval. (Social Justice Statement p.10)</i></p> <p>Following the Global Financial Crisis of 2007–08, both Pope Benedict (in <i>Caritas in Veritate</i>) and Pope Francis (in <i>Laudato Si’</i>) have highlighted the following criteria for addressing the failure of the market and guiding the development of inclusive and sustainable growth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People and nature are not mere tools of production • Economic growth alone cannot ensure inclusive and sustainable development • Social equity must be built into the heart of the economy • Businesses must benefit all of society, not just shareholders • The excluded and vulnerable must be included in decision-making <p>(refer Social Justice Statement pp.12–14)</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>	

ACT Towards inclusive and sustainable development

Pages 15-18

From your information [Seeing]

... and analysis and theological reflection [Judging]

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

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

We all have a role to play :

Identify groups who may be particularly in need in your community

- Visit the Australian Bureau of Statistics census data by geography:
<http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/2016%20search%20by%20geography>
- Access the Bishops' Pastoral Research Office social profile for your parish:
<http://pro.catholic.org.au/catholic-social-profiles>

Find out more about the global movement for inclusive and sustainable development:

- Find out about inclusive growth from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development: <http://www.oecd.org/inclusive-growth/>
- The United Nations Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 promotes 17 key principles and a range of community strategies: www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/takeaction

Parish and local community action:

- Work with others in your parish and local community to research the issue and to raise local awareness, including with other groups who hold similar concerns.
- Join your parish social justice group or organise a special meeting to discuss the social issues of your local community. Invite experts and guest speakers to address the issues of concern to you. Join in campaigns of like-minded groups.
- Meet with your local Federal member of parliament to voice your concerns and seek action. Contact details can be found here: www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members/Members
- Give voice to those who are excluded – email, write letters, call talk-back radio, call your local member to raise awareness, challenge myths or stereotypes, and to bring about change.

What challenges emerged for you?

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

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: <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/social-teaching>

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

TEN STEPS

Towards an inclusive economy

To accompany the Social Justice Statement 2017–2018 ***Everybody's Business***

TEN STEPS TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE, SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

1. REFLECT ON THE GOSPEL

The Gospel reading for Social Justice Sunday 2017 is Jesus' parable of the workers in the vineyard. Using an everyday example of economic hardship, Jesus teaches how the reign of God is open to all, generous, and especially mindful of those left behind. God provides sufficiently and fairly for each person, all the while attentive to the needs of those who experience exclusion and have little hope.

(Social Justice Statement 2017-2018, p.3)

Prevailing notions of justice often have much to commend them - yet are diminished compared to God's love and justice. Our vision can be restricted, if 'fair' and 'equal' simply means asking: why should someone who works one hour receive the same pay as someone who works eight hours? Or why should some receive subsidised housing, electricity, council rates? Read, then re-read, Matthew 20:1–16. Then reflect on God's justice.

2. BECOME INFORMED ABOUT 'ECONOMIC EXCLUSION'

Since 1992, overall national wealth increased by 40 per cent... Australians now have the world's second-highest average net wealth per person. The problem for those who believe in a just society is that the benefits of more recent growth have been spread so unevenly. The top 20 per cent of households received far greater increases in income than the poorest 20 per cent.

(Social Justice Statement 2017-2018, pp.4–5)

Jesus calls us to build a just society. This includes working together to ensure poverty is eradicated and that all benefit from a society's common wealth. Get the facts about economic exclusion. While many live in comparative comfort, three million Australians (including over 730,000 children) live in poverty.

3. IDENTIFY THOSE WHO EXPERIENCE EXCLUSION

Consider the key areas of economic exclusion in your neighbourhood. It may be issues like homelessness, environmental degradation, youth unemployment or cuts to Sunday penalty rates.

(Social Justice Statement 2017-2018, p.17)

On Social Justice Sunday, and over the year ahead, consider where the economy fails your local community. Be mindful that sometimes poverty and exclusion is hidden. Are there particularly vulnerable groups in our churches, workplaces or schools? Parish and community census profiles can help identify groups in need:

The Australian Bureau of Statistics: www.abs.gov.au

The Bishops' Pastoral Research Office: <http://pro.catholic.org.au/catholic-social-profiles>

4. JOIN THE WORK OF COMBATting POVERTY AND HOMELESSNESS

As people of the Gospel, we have to be concerned about growing inequality, and especially about the situation of the more vulnerable in our community.

(Social Justice Statement 2017-2018, p.5)

Information and campaigns addressing the needs of people who are **unemployed** can be found at:

Catholic Social Services Australia: www.cssa.org.au

Australian Council of Social Service: www.acoss.org.au

Welfare Rights Centre: www.welfarerightscentre.org.au

For information and campaigns supporting **vulnerable workers**:

Australian Catholic Council for Employment Relations: www.accer.asn.au

Australia Institute Centre for Future Work: www.futurework.org.au

ACTU 'Change the Rules' campaign: www.australianunions.org.au/change_the_rules

Organisations addressing **housing affordability and homelessness**:

The Society of St Vincent de Paul: www.vinnies.org.au

Australian Catholic Housing Alliance: www.catholichousing.org.au

National Shelter: www.shelter.org.au & Homelessness Australia:

www.homelessnessaustralia.org.au

5. STAND IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE FIRST PEOPLES OF AUSTRALIA

Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities struggle with social and economic burdens that most Australians cannot imagine. That they are overrepresented on almost every indicator of disadvantage is a national shame...

(Social Justice Statement 2017-2018, p.8)

Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience exclusion – from policy negotiations that affect their people and land, from a fair share of national prosperity, and often through being typecast as a burden on the broader community. We are called to support our Indigenous sisters and brothers in the pursuit of national recognition, reconciliation and social justice.

For cultural, Acknowledgement and liturgical resources, visit the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council: www.natsicc.org.au

Join the movement for Indigenous recognition: www.recognise.org.au

Support the 'Close the Gap' campaign at: www.antar.org.au/closethegap

6. END POVERTY AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

The principle of the common good calls for an economy at the service of all, promoting development that is attentive to the social and environmental impacts of the market, now and for future generations.

(Social Justice Statement 2017-2018, p.13)

Global warming, environmental disasters and degradation have an increasing impact on the world's poor. For more information and helpful resources, visit Catholic Earthcare, the official ecological agency of the Catholic Church in Australia: www.catholicearthcare.org.au

Over 800 million people are living in extreme poverty in our world - one in nine people are going hungry, mostly in developing countries. Find out more and donate at Caritas Australia: www.caritas.org.au

We all have a role to ensure Australia is a good global citizen. Individuals can do much, such as how we purchase and consume (see visit the Fair Wear Foundation: www.fairwear.org). Australian businesses need to ensure ethical standards of operations in developing nations (visit Jubilee Australia: www.jubileeaustralia.org). Our government needs to ensure social justice in trade agreements entered into (visit the Australia Fair Trade & Investment Network: www.aftinet.org.au)

7. INCLUSIVE ECONOMIES, GLOBAL CITIZENS: YOU, ME, US

When it comes to building an inclusive economy, we all have a vested interest and we all have a responsibility to be involved. This is not a task that can be left just to governments or the market...

(Social Justice Statement 2017-2018, p.15)

Popes Benedict XVI and Francis have made strong calls for a more inclusive economic order. Study their Encyclicals, *Caritas in Veritate* and *Laudato Si'*. Access at the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council: www.acsjc.org.au/social-teaching/encyclicals

The United Nations is working with governments, businesses and civil society to mobilize efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030. Find out about the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and how individuals, organisations and communities can take action: www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/takeaction

8. CALL FOR CHANGE AS A MATTER OF FAITH

We call for a new approach that prevents exclusion from the outset and, like the owner of the vineyard in our Gospel reading, engages all people as dignified, active contributors to sustainable and inclusive growth.

(Social Justice Statement 2017-2018, p.3)

In baptism, each one of us is called to share in the ministry of Jesus Christ – to bring good news to the poor and let the oppressed go free (Luke 4:18). We are asked to serve people in need – in our workplace, church or social groups, whether known or unknown to us, on the streets or in the broader community. In solidarity, we must challenge views that condemn them. We work for an economy that prevents exclusion.

Pope Francis has instituted the annual World Day of the Poor for 19 November 2017. In his message for the day, he says:

Blessed, therefore, are the open hands that embrace the poor and help them: they are the hands that bring hope. Blessed are the hands that reach beyond every barrier of culture, religion and nationality, and pour the balm of consolation over the wound of humanity. Blessed are the open hands that ask nothing in exchange, with no 'ifs' or 'buts' or 'maybes': they are hands that call down God's blessing upon their brothers and sisters.

9. GET ACTIVE

Work with others in your parish and local community to research the issue and to raise local awareness, including with other groups who hold similar concerns... We are called to give voice to those who have been cast aside and, in solidarity, to call for an inclusive economy at the service of all.

(Social Justice Statement 2017-2018, p.17)

Don't leave it to others, this is everyone's business and we all have a part to play! Join your parish social justice group. Or organise a special meeting. Discuss social issues of your local community. Identify needs. Invite experts and guest speakers. Address issues that concern you. Join campaigns of like-minded groups.

Consider what your parish and community groups can do to mark Anti-Poverty Week. In 2017, it runs from 15 to 21 October: www.antipovertyweek.org.au

Don't waste the gift of living within a democracy. Meet with your local State and Federal member of parliament. Voice your concerns. Seek action. (Federal contact details at: [www.aph.gov.au/Senators and Members/Members](http://www.aph.gov.au/Senators_and_Members/Members))

Give voice to those who are excluded – email, write letters, call talk-back radio, call your MP. Submit articles to your local newspaper. Raise awareness. Challenge myths and stereotypes. Bring about change.

10. LET US PRAY

Use the accompanying Prayer Card prepared by the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council for personal prayer, in schools and parishes, and for family and group prayer time.

God of justice and compassion,
whose light shines into our hearts and into our nation's halls of power,
strengthen our faith as we acknowledge the enormity of our task:
to include all in the prosperity of this land.

We pray for your spirit of generosity in challenging greed and neglect.
Give us your grace to reach out to the lowest paid workers,
families subsisting on meagre incomes,
people who are homeless,
the dispossessed First Peoples of this land,
so that we may achieve change, inspired by the Gospel, that leads to human
flourishing.

We pray for your spirit of truth as we place our own economic choices before you,
reflecting on our own motives as we strive
to give and to keep,
to save and to spend,
to invest and to speak out in ways that honour every human being.

We pray for your spirit of fierce love and determination as we seek
to assist and empower the most vulnerable,
to create jobs and opportunities where they are most needed,
to build an inclusive economy that enables government and business to champion a
society where justice and equity abound.

May we be instruments of your compassion as we take up the needs of the poor,
May we be instruments of your mercy as we bring truth to greed and neglect,
May we be instruments of your creative spirit as we seek to make our world anew.

In Christ and through the Spirit we pray.

The Social Justice Statement is current for a full 12 months until Social Justice Sunday in September 2018. So work on all these ten steps and plan to participate in events over the coming year.