

Summary: Social Justice Statement 2019–2020

Making it Real: Genuine Human Encounter in our Digital World

The Australian Catholic Bishops' Social Justice Statement for 2019 – 2020, *Making it Real: Genuine human encounter in our digital world*, affirms the positive possibilities for encounter and solidarity offered by new digital media, while warning of those elements of our digital world that may be harmful. These include information overload; social isolation; marginalisation of the vulnerable; consumerism and fake news.

The Statement reminds us that the new digital media cannot be seen as neutral or 'unaffected by any moral considerations'. While many users do not realise it, the core business of social media platforms is to sell advertising and maximise profits. People's personal lives may be reduced to data that is traded for profit or power, and it is used to target and influence us in ways previously unthinkable. Pushing users to more extreme positions and promoting fake news and conspiracy theories sells, but this is at odds with human solidarity.

The Statement amplifies Pope Francis' call to us to 'boldly become citizens of the digital world', with the image of the Good Samaritan as our inspiration. We are called not only to love our neighbour, but to bring the love of God to the new global neighbourhood. The Statement points out that we are called not just to be inhabitants of this new digital world, but active citizens shaping it. All of us – whether we are users, communities, industrial or political leaders – have a role to play in rejecting hatred, divisions and falsehoods. We have a duty to foster a neighbourhood that promotes those human attributes and social values that lend themselves to genuine human encounter – love, understanding, beauty, goodness, truth and trustworthiness, joy and hope.

Follow the Office for Social Justice of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference
Facebook: @socialjusticeACBC Twitter: @JusticeCatholic

Bulletin note

The Bishops are asking for your help to promote the Statement in the weeks leading up to Social Justice Sunday. A notice for your parish bulletin or newsletter could be:

We celebrate Social Justice Sunday on 29 September. This year, the Australian Bishops' Social Justice Statement is titled: 'Making it Real: Genuine human encounter in our digital world'. It shares Pope Francis' challenge to us to 'boldly become citizens of the digital world'. It points out that we are called not just to be inhabitants of this world, but active citizens shaping it.

For further details about the Social Justice Statement, visit the Office for Social Justice website (www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au) or call (02) 8306 3499. Order the Statement online at: bit.ly/socialjusticeshop Follow us on Facebook: @socialjusticeACBC or Twitter: @JusticeCatholic

Associated resources

Download resources free of charge from the Office for Social Justice website (www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/publications/social-justice-statements) before Social Justice Sunday. They will include Social Justice Sunday Liturgy Notes, a PowerPoint presentation and resources for schools and social justice groups.

Prayer Cards and 'Ten Steps' leaflets can be ordered online at bit.ly/socialjusticeshop or from the Office for Social Justice on (02) 8306 3499 or by email: admin@acsjc.org.au.