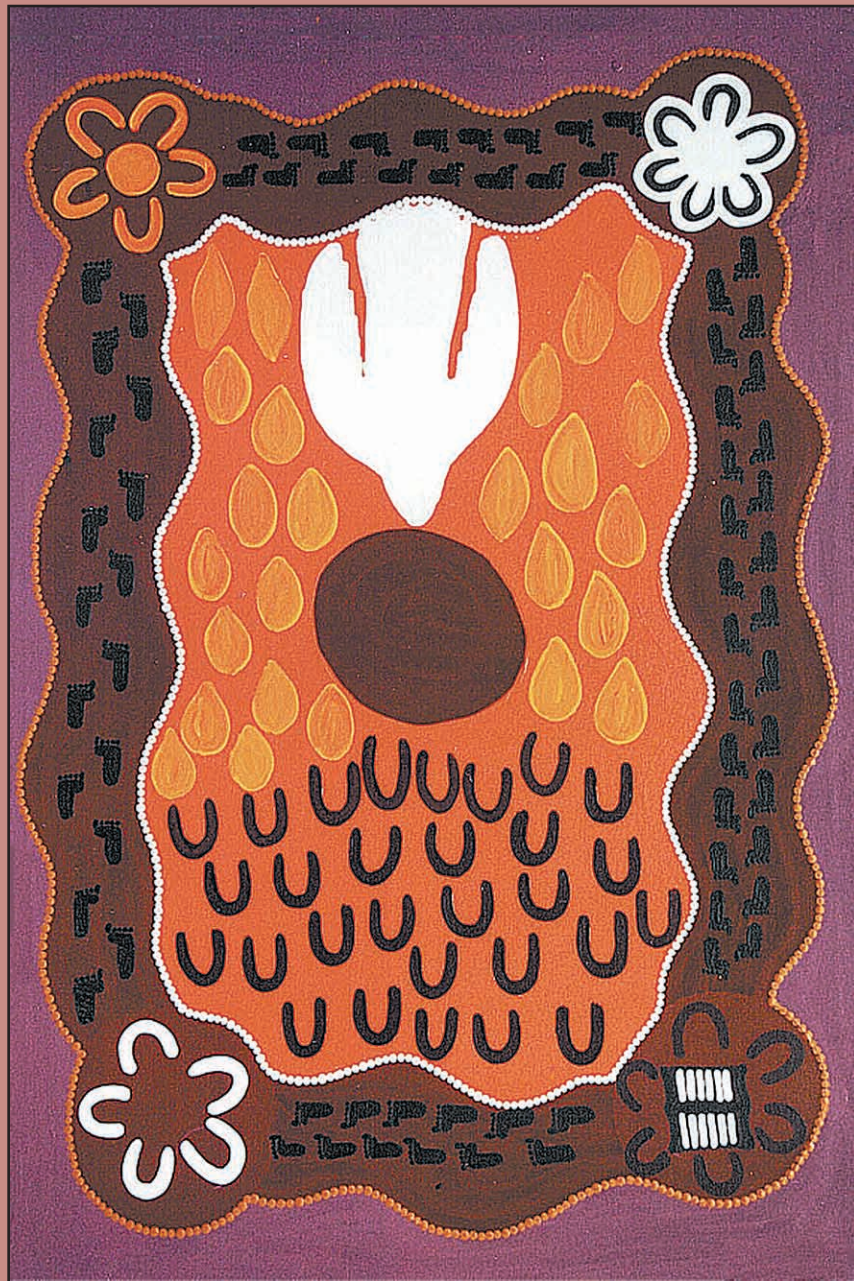


**Social Justice Sunday Statement 2004**

# PEACE BE WITH YOU



*Cultivating a Culture of Peace*



**Australian Catholic Bishops Conference**



## Chairman's message

On behalf of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, I present the Social Justice Statement for 2004, *Peace Be With You: Cultivating a Culture of Peace*.

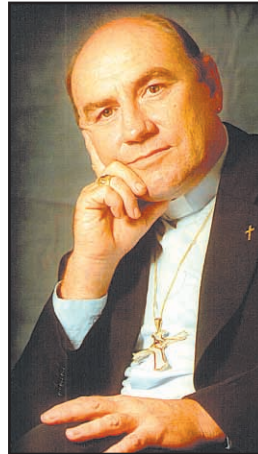
In a world beset by fear and violence it is appropriate for us to consider the cultivation of peace in our own hearts, our families and our communities. We pray and hope that the peace of Christ will grow in our 21st century world.

The Statement counsels continuing development of a peaceful culture in Australia through reconciliation with Indigenous Australians, development of ecumenical and interfaith dialogue and prayer, and the spread of true democratic and multicultural values.

In the 1967 encyclical *Populorum progressio*, Pope Paul VI called "development" the new name for peace; during his address to the Australian Bishops during their 2004 *ad limina* visit to Rome, the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, echoed his predecessor, saying:

*Vigilant concern for the poor, the abandoned and the mistreated, and promotion of a globalisation of charity will do much to indicate a path of genuine development which overcomes social marginalisation and favours economic benefit for all.*

Let each of us start to cultivate peace where we can.



With every blessing

Christopher A. Saunders, DD  
Bishop of Broome  
Chairman  
Australian Catholic Social Justice  
Council

## Acknowledgements

The Social Justice Sunday Statement 2003 has been prepared by the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council (ACSJC), the national social justice and human rights agency of the Catholic Church in Australia. The ACSJC is accountable to the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference through the Bishops Committee for Justice, Development, Ecology and Peace. The Bishops Conference acknowledges the work of Rev Prof Michael Tate PP, the ACSJC members and Secretariat in the preparation of the Statement.

An electronic version of the Statement is available on the ACBC website at [www.acbc.catholic.org.au](http://www.acbc.catholic.org.au) and the ACSJC site at [www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au](http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au).

The cover image is a painting by Geraldine Gill, titled *Pentecost*. Born in 1965, Geraldine is a Kukatja woman from the Balgo region of the Kimberley in Western Australia.

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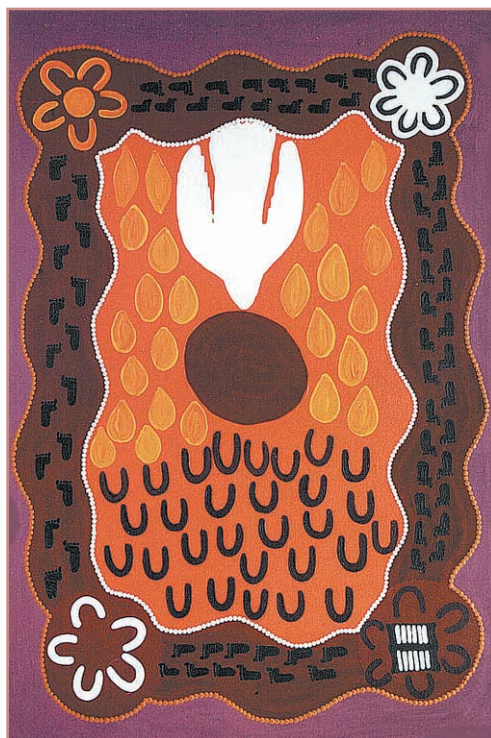
## AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference is the permanent assembly of the bishops of our nation and the body through which they act together in carrying out the Church's mission at a national level. The ACBC website at [www.acbc.catholic.org.au](http://www.acbc.catholic.org.au) gives a full list of Bishops Conference committees as well as statements and other items of news and interest.



# PEACE BE WITH YOU

## Cultivating a Culture of Peace



*The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord, and He said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so am I sending you.'*

John 20: 20-21

**M**any Australian families and communities were suddenly cast into terrible grief and shock as they received news of the deaths and injuries caused by the terrorist bombings of the nightclubs in Bali two years ago. Stories of great courage, of selfless devotion to friends and strangers, also emerged. The profound shock of the Bali bombings still reverberates among Australians.

Our sympathy with those caught up in that horror has opened our eyes and deepened our compassion for all those around the world experiencing such atrocities. It has urgently raised the question: What can we Australians do to cultivate a culture of peace in which such crimes never deface our common humanity? Pope John XXIII's great 1963 encyclical letter, *Peace on Earth*, a benchmark in the Church's understanding of peace, points the way.

In his 2003 World Day of Peace message, celebrating 40 years since this encyclical was issued, Pope John Paul II recalled the four key concepts in *Peace on Earth*:

*With the profound intuition that characterised him, John XXIII identified the essential conditions for peace in four precise requirements of the human spirit: **truth, justice, love and freedom***<sup>1</sup>

The Holy Father says that truth builds peace when we acknowledge not only our rights, but also our duties towards others. Justice builds peace when, in practice, we respect others' rights and fulfil our duties towards them. Love builds peace when we treat the needs of

others as our own. Freedom builds peace and makes it thrive when, in cultivating a culture of peace, we act according to reason and are responsible for our actions.

Putting these precepts into action, we understand that a culture of peace begins within our own hearts, spreads to our own households and then our communities before it can become an entrenched fact of the larger society's life. Pope John Paul II reminds us of one certain principle:

*There will be peace only to the extent that humanity as a whole rediscovers its fundamental calling to be one family, a family in which the dignity and rights of individuals – whatever their status, race or religion – are accepted ...*<sup>2</sup>

Certainly, at times, overwhelmed by the challenges of war or other catastrophes, we wonder "What can I do?" Pope John Paul II encourages us:

*... men and women, in the face of tragedies which continue to inflict humanity, are tempted to yield to fatalism, as if peace were an unattainable ideal. The Church, on the other hand, has always taught and continues today to teach a very simple axiom: **peace is possible**. Indeed, the Church does not tire of repeating that **peace is a duty**.*<sup>3</sup>

A culture of peace is a culture of life. Respect for the sanctity of life and the fostering of the inherent dignity of the person is foundational to our faith and the many ministries of our Church. We can all defend the sanctity



## Peace Be With You

of life – of the unborn, the sick and elderly, the criminal sentenced to death, and communities ravaged by poverty, famine or war.

A culture of peace is also a culture of human rights, which include access to proper nourishment, health, housing and education. We can all defend these basic human needs, affirming and promoting religious, civil and political freedoms, as well as cultural, economic and social rights.

Cultivating a culture of peace is a spiritual journey that for us is centred on the Eucharist and involves living the values of the Gospel in our world. Prayer, reconciliation and participation in the life of our local Church are essential so that we remain focused on Christ who walks the path of peace before us.

Pope John Paul points out:

*In the end, peace is not essentially about **structures** but about **people** ... [and the] **innumerable gestures of peace** made by men and women throughout history who have kept hope and have not given in to discouragement. **Gestures of peace** spring from the lives of people who **foster peace first of all in their own hearts** ... **Gestures of peace** create a tradition and a culture of peace.*<sup>4</sup>

Let each of us start where we can.

There is much to celebrate and much to be done in cultivating a culture of peace in our own hearts, in our families, in the Australian community and among the whole human family. We should do so with the courage and hope which comes from our faith that it is into *this* world that the risen Lord comes with a greeting which is at the same time his gift to his followers: "Peace be with you." (John 20:20)

### Shalom – may things go well with you

"Shalom", an everyday greeting in the Palestine of Jesus' time, conveyed a sense of wishing the recipient to be "safe and sound" in every aspect of life, personal and social. A long tradition in the Jewish scriptures teaches us that "shalom" means well-being, and is emphatically social: *may things go well with you*. It does not refer only to an individual interior state of being, or simply to the absence of conflict. It is so closely allied to the right ordering of relationships that the psalmist can sing "righteousness and peace shall kiss each other" (Ps 85:10). "Shalom" implies reconciliation, the just settlement of disputes, and the defeat of evil.

In the New Testament, peace is portrayed as the state of full and satisfying relationships with God, each other and the whole of creation. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the source of our rescue from everything which threatens or destroys that state. The risen Jesus greets the bewildered disciples with the statement that he is their peace: "Peace be with you." He breathes the Holy

Spirit, the bringer of forgiveness and reconciliation, upon them (John 20:21, 22). Violence, and injustice in all its forms, are in principle defeated, absorbed by "the One in whom God dwelt bodily" (Col. 2:9). As Paul says succinctly: "He is our Peace" (Eph 2:14).

The greeting and gift of this Peace can be accepted or rejected. Those who accept this gift are "children of peace" (Luke 10:6). As children of peace they are called to cultivate the gift and bring it to full flowering in the circumstances of their own lives and the wider social milieu. There are no boundaries to the field to be cultivated: "Peace, peace to the one far off, peace to the one who is near." (Is 57:19)

This will involve the demanding task of identifying all those injustices that militate against peace, such as life-threatening poverty, ethnic rivalries, the reduction of human beings to economic factors, or religious conflict. In Christ we are called to act now in solidarity with those who do not know peace. Through our hope in the risen Christ we bring a taste of that divine peace which will come at the completion of all things in God.

For us the challenges can be met in the confidence that from time immemorial the divine Spirit has been hovering over our country, once named, even before its European discovery, the "South Land of the Holy Spirit".<sup>5</sup>

Peaceful dwelling in Australia requires attention to reconciliation and injustice. As well, it demands care for the environment on behalf of current and future generations, who deserve a world that continues to reflect the glory of God.

Let us accept this divine gift of peace and together make something precious of it, cultivating it in every field possible. Then "peace-makers who sow peace reap a harvest of justice". (James 3:18)

### The family

The family "is the primary agent of a future of peace".<sup>6</sup> Respect for very different personalities, the art of sharing and the practice of non-violent dealing with conflict begin in the home. This is the seedbed for respect for the human dignity of all, for the sharing of resources within the nation and beyond, and for the renunciation of aggression to achieve political or social change.

It is in the complexities and joys and difficulties and wonderful moments of living together that a culture of peace begins. We cannot overestimate the contribution to peace made by many Australians simply by sharing their domestic lives in a positive way. Families, with the interaction of the generations, play a crucial role. When working well, the family is not simply the natural and fundamental nucleus of society, but becomes a model for the whole human family of the lived experience of peace.

• *There is much to celebrate and much to be done in cultivating a culture of peace in our own hearts, in our families, in the Australian community and among the whole human family.* •





The alternative is frightening:

*Families constitute the training ground for aggression. It is within the family that aggressive behaviours are first learned; to the extent that families fail to instil non-violent values in their children, those children will be more likely to develop a repertoire of violent behaviours as they negotiate life in society at large.<sup>7</sup>*

Children have a special right to be brought up in an atmosphere of peace in their homes, free from the fear of abuse of any kind. These most precious and vulnerable members of our community must be protected so as to enjoy their childhood and grow into mature adults.

Not only actual violence against children and young people, but their exposure to violent altercations between adults is particularly damaging.

Sexual abuse is an area of violence that has not been openly spoken about until recent times, either by the victims or by society generally. The added dimension of breach of trust by the adult concerned, including Church personnel, makes such crimes even more grievous. The courage and persistence of many victims is to be supported.

Agencies such as the St Vincent de Paul Society provide essential and loving material help to families in need, particularly through poverty relief, crisis accommodation and other services. The Church also assists families through the provision of professional family services. The diocesan welfare agency, Centacare, assists family relationships at all stages of the life cycle. Parenting skills education, for example, is a fairly recent addition to the traditional range of programs. Peaceful means of resolving conflict are presented, to show a different response to heated, at times violent, responses.

Violence, in the form of bullying, is a growing problem in Australian schools. Bullying can take the form of physical or psychological aggression. The process of "restorative justice" for this and other issues causing conflict, is one way of addressing these problems, which can make school life a grievous burden instead of a passage towards maturity.

Restorative justice involves the key parties sitting down with a mediator, listening to all sides of the story and agreeing on how to move forward together. The

mediator usually outlines the process, then may remain in the background as support while the students involved talk to each other. With trust and goodwill this process is remarkably successful because young people are required to listen carefully to another's point of view and are then more likely to understand each other's grievances and learn negotiation skills.

Reconciliation and forgiveness can be learned in this atmosphere. Forgiveness is not the opposite of justice, but of the desire for resentment and revenge, of getting even. It is within the intimate community of the family, and in the formative environment of our schools, that these values are most effectively developed.



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*"The family is the primary agent of a future of peace."*

Christ crucified provides the supreme example of the forgiveness we are called on to foster. On the Cross, condemned by the authorities and taunted by the crowd, he prayed: "Father forgive them; they know not what they are doing." (Luke 23:34)

### *Reconciliation with Indigenous Australians*

The claim that we have created a tolerant, multicultural society will not ring true while it does not wholeheartedly embrace the descendants of the original inhabitants of this land.

The spirit of reconciliation will continue to be fostered in the development of a truly peaceful and equal relationship between Indigenous and other Australians. We need to recover the momentum of the process of reconciliation demonstrated in the "bridge walks" of 2000 and still advanced by the people's movement for reconciliation.

An immediate demand of the reconciliation process is to address the dire social and economic circumstances that reveal how Indigenous people are disadvantaged relative to the broader community on almost every indicator of need, including mortality rates and illness, poverty and income, employment and education.

Still, the imperative of reconciliation can never obscure the claims of justice, which extend beyond practical responses in these areas. These claims have their roots in the displacement of the Indigenous inhabitants from their traditional lands, the failure to recognise the structures and values of their societies, their forced assimilation into European culture and the breaking up of families.



True reconciliation often begins at the personal and local level, with small steps by community and Church groups working with, rather than for, Indigenous Australians.

For example, the Catholic Leaders of Religious Institutes in NSW have provided religious congregations in NSW with the resources for the traditional custodians of our land to be appropriately acknowledged at every meeting or gathering. There are many examples of local initiatives aiming to recognise the unique culture and heritage of Indigenous communities, to acknowledge the injustices of the past, and to work together for a shared future.

Considerable effort has also been made in a number of areas to vest communities of Indigenous people with the means for them to forge a future which acknowledges their human dignity and history.

Education, in its full sense, is the key to true equality in Australia in the 21st century. For example, through its geographical position on the north coast of Western Australia and its long history of Church involvement with Indigenous people in the Kimberley area, the Broome campus of the University of Notre Dame Australia has been ideally positioned to take a major step towards reconciliation and justice; indeed, Notre Dame University Broome is officially a Campus of Reconciliation.

The campus provides an educational arena where Indigenous and non-Indigenous people can socialise, learn and study together. By dealing directly with each other, students, staff and visitors to the university develop more appreciation and understanding of the histories, cultures and law of different Aboriginal peoples. In a practical, supportive environment, the university provides unique step-by-step certificate courses that lead to degree studies. The Edmund Rice Centre for Justice promotes social justice activities involving the students in the local Broome community.

The future of national reconciliation requires the encouragement and support of Australia's leaders in all fields of national life, including politics, religion, academia and business and among the Indigenous communities themselves.

### *Cultivating a culture of peace between religions*

There can be no peace among nations without peace among religions.

In 1986, and again in 2002, Pope John Paul II invited leaders within Christianity and the major world religions to Assisi, the home of St Francis, where he joined them in a special meeting of prayer for peace. That meeting demonstrated a bond of solidarity among believers that dramatically challenged those who try to pit adherents of one religion against another in violent conflict.

*To pray for peace is to open the human heart to the inroads of God's power to renew all things. With the life-giving force of his grace, God can create openings for peace where only obstacles and closures are apparent; he can strengthen and enlarge the solidarity of the human family in spite of our endless history of division and conflict. To pray for peace is to pray for justice, for a right-ordering of relations within and among nations and peoples.<sup>8</sup>*

The Catholic Church in Australia is committed to ecumenical and interfaith dialogue and prayer. This fosters relations between Catholics, other Christians and other faiths in a way that breaks down many ancient enmities that, over the centuries, have led to violence. Once again, initiatives taken at the local level bring about understanding and respect.

An outstanding example is the *Journey of Promise*, a youth project of the Australian National Dialogue of Christians, Muslims and Jews, under the auspices of the National Council of Churches. The project was supported by a Federal Government "Living in Harmony" grant. Korrily McDermott, of St Patrick's parish in Parramatta, west of Sydney, writes an account of her journey of encounter and understanding, accompanied by participants aged from 18-25 from each of the Christian, Muslim and Jewish faiths:

*Like some Catholics, I've looked at interfaith dialogue with caution ... I assumed that interfaith dialogue was fuelled by an agenda which said that all religions were the same and, therefore, as good as each other. With this preconception, I felt a little defensive about the concept, as I figured it would undermine the need for Christ and his Church and ultimately, my identity as a Catholic.*

*However, I knew that many people, including Pope John Paul II, were extolling the virtue of dialogue with those of different faiths. After spending a week with 10 Muslims, 10 Jews and nine Christians ... I have come to understand that interfaith dialogue does not seek to blur the fundamental differences between religions, but rather starts with the premise that we all have something to learn about God, and we can learn holiness from each other.*

*Realising that the Muslims and Jews I met on the camp were good and holy people, and could teach me a thing or two about the nature of God and (indirectly) about the identity of Jesus, was humbling. While Christ and the Church are "the way", I discovered that ... although I am Catholic, individually, I don't possess the whole "truth". Like everyone, I am on a journey, and grow when I take time to listen.<sup>9</sup>*

In a local action in 2002, Bridgewater parish in Tasmania was encouraged, on the Fridays of Lent, to adopt the Ramadan practice of fasting between sunrise and sunset. This was seen as a gesture of solidarity with the Muslim community locally and as a contribution to understanding between the two world faiths. In 2001, the Pope himself fasted on the final day of Ramadan. Together with prayer and generosity to the poor, fasting has an important place in all the great religions. Such

*“The future of national reconciliation requires the encouragement and support of Australia's leaders in all fields of national life.”*





actions encourage the common religious impulse to be found in the human family.

At Easter 2003, the Commission for Australian Catholic Women launched the initiative *Catholic Women – Creating a Culture of Peace*, as a number of Catholic women's groups decided to work together to help foster action on faith, life and women's contribution to the elimination of violence and equality of access to living with dignity.

As well as developing creative arts opportunities for individuals and school students around this theme, the aim is to encourage and promote opportunities for groups and communities through "dialogue, pastoral planning and theological reflection" to create a culture of peace among people of many faiths.

### *Cultivating a culture of peace in the field of democracy and society*

In a statement without precedent in Catholic social teaching, Pope John Paul II emphasised in 1991:

*The Church values the democratic system in as much as it ensures the participation of citizens in making political choices, guarantees to the governed the possibility of both electing and holding accountable those who govern them, and of replacing them through peaceful means when appropriate.<sup>10</sup>*

Rev Dr Jonathan Inkpin



*“The Catholic Church in Australia is committed to ecumenical and interfaith dialogue and prayer.”*

In countries where some groups are excluded from the political process, or lack an effective voice at the parliamentary or governmental level, the potential for violence is high. Protest movements and the outbreak of civil conflict are suppressed or countered by the violence of unrepresentative and often tyrannical regimes.

The egalitarian impulse in Australian society has strongly shaped our political institutions. Democracy is as natural to us as the air we breathe. A high degree of social cohesiveness has resulted from the advocacy and labours of many in the political field. The resulting peaceful transfer of power from one elected government to another at all levels in Australia cannot be overvalued.

The federal system itself allows for experimentation and diversity, and gives space for the rise and testing of political movements, some of which endure and some of which fall by the wayside. We have progressively widened the franchise so that exclusions based on

gender, race, or property rights have been abolished. In various parliaments, such as the House of Assembly in Tasmania and the Senate at the Commonwealth level, a system of proportional representation ensures that minority political movements have an effective voice.

This largely explains why riots and civil disorder in the pursuit of political goals are rare in contemporary Australia. Inclusive and participatory parliamentary and local government processes should be safeguarded and strengthened to ensure that Australia remains a peaceful democracy.

Those in political power who have ensured that adequate mechanisms exist for the effective expression of minority and dissenting opinions, and those who provide avenues for freedom of speech and publicly-stated views, serve Australia well. Non-violent street marches and public gatherings are to be encouraged as opportunities for influencing public policy.

Australia is generally a peaceful society, in which most of us go about our lives without fear of violence. Strident reactions to well-publicised homicides or violent assaults are expressions of outrage that the normal pattern of social cohesion and tolerance has been violated in a way that is well beyond the limits of acceptable behaviour.

The widespread political support for the prohibition and surrender of certain forms of firearms was

largely motivated by a desire to create a culture of peace – a culture in which the possession of a firearm is properly regarded as a privilege and not a right, and in which recourse to an available firearm to express rage or “resolve” a dispute would be less likely. The remarkable acceptance of a special levy to fund the buy-back of some categories of firearms demonstrated the deep-seated conviction that Australia must not go down the path of some other societies.

### *Spreading democratic and multicultural values*

Australians live in a land mercifully free of political violence. This has been achieved by the effort of numerous men and women in creating institutions and ways of acting that ensure participation and inclusiveness so that non-violent political change can occur. Australia's experience of the peaceful benefits of



democracy should be shared with societies in other lands, with proper account being taken of the history and culture of other peoples. The claims of human dignity and the right to engage in non-violent political processes are, however, universal.

Recent popes have consistently praised the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 for its recognition of the rights inherent in the human person and human dignity. It is indeed a charter for peace. Civil and political rights on the one hand, and economic and social rights on the other, are universal and indivisible. Emphasis on the one category to the detriment of the other does not respect the holistic nature of human beings living in community.

*But when human rights are ignored or scorned, and when the pursuit of individual interests unjustly prevails over the common good, then the seeds of instability, rebellion and violence are inevitably sown.<sup>11</sup>*

Australians should strongly protest at the actions of any governments that repress dissent and suffocate the political process. Positively, Australians should help cultivate structures such as human rights commissions and independent judicial institutions which can help ensure peaceful social change.

We encourage people to join or actively support political parties and "grass-roots" movements; to seek elected office; to keep the democratic process accountable at the local level; to encourage alternative voices regarding the future of Australia; always to engage in the political struggle with the tools of non-violence. As the revered civil rights activist Dr Martin Luther King stated:

*One day we must come to see that peace is not merely a distant goal we seek, but that it is a means by which we arrive at that goal. We must pursue peaceful ends through peaceful means.<sup>12</sup>*

The cultural diversity of our nation is closely linked with the Australian democratic spirit. We are a remarkable gathering of peoples from many tribes and nations. Many of those who came to this country as migrants or refugees were themselves locked in armed conflict with other ethnic or national groups, either personally or in the recent history of their homeland. Their experience of the gift of peace in Australia is very tangible. It marks a real change in their capacity to live without fear of murderous violence. Freed from this fear, people find that an appreciation of the human dignity of others can emerge.

Concerning those who arrive in Australia without authorisation and claim asylum, we support and encourage the adoption of modes of processing that reflect the high value placed by Australian society generally on human dignity. Only then will the Australian program for the reception of asylum seekers truly embody the humanitarian values that have acted as a beacon for millions of migrants and refugees over the decades.

At the local level, many informal groups already welcome, mentor and support asylum seekers who have been released from detention on temporary visas. In Dubbo and Young, in central New South Wales, for example, Afghan men who arrived in Australia seeking asylum have been employed by local abattoir owners. In these situations, personal contact and acquaintance lead to the newcomers being welcomed and positive relationships developing, as barriers of ignorance about each other's culture are broken down.

At the suggestion of their parish priest, Fr Paul Bourke, parishioners of the South Australian parish of St Teresa, Whyalla, 70km from Baxter Detention Centre, have organised to have some home-made meals taken in to the centre each week by the ministers, to be shared by the detainees after each service. A parishioner comments that, "This is very much appreciated by the detainees and is a way of spreading the news that these people being held in detention are our brothers and sisters who desperately need our love and compassion."

While in the overall scheme of things actions such as these may seem minor, they are helping to break down barriers and work towards cultivating a culture of peace.

### *'Development is the new name for peace'<sup>13</sup>*

The peace that Jesus Christ gives to the world is holistic, communal and knows no boundaries. The fullness of peace is diminished, however, where many members of the human family suffer malnutrition, disease and high mortality, and where their societies are weakened by the stunting of human potential because of lack of education and employment opportunities.

In our world of more than six billion people, one billion own 80 per cent of global gross domestic product, while another one billion struggle to survive on less than \$US1 per day. Each year the world produces about 300 kilograms of grain per person,<sup>14</sup> yet every day more than 800 million live with the pain of hunger and 24,000 die as a result of starvation and malnutrition.<sup>15</sup> Market forces cannot be relied on to achieve a more equitable distribution than revealed in these figures.

The demand for economic justice also has relevance to the operation of the Australian economy, particularly with regard to the relative disadvantage endured by vulnerable individuals and families despite the growing wealth of our country and a decade of outstanding economic performance.

In March 2004 the findings of a major Senate Inquiry, *A hand up not a hand out: Renewing the fight against poverty*, revealed that more than 20 per cent of Australians live on less than the minimum wage. One million people are classed as poor, despite the fact that they live in households where at least one adult works. More than 700,000 children are growing up in homes where neither parent works.

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*'The cultural diversity of our nation is closely linked with the Australian democratic spirit. We are a remarkable gathering of peoples from many tribes and nations.'*

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The inquiry found that ...

*... Australia is losing the fight for the fair go, that inequality is accelerating and that there is an increasing loss of opportunity in our community which denies an increasing number of Australians a legitimate chance at success.<sup>16</sup>*

The most vulnerable Australians, those most at risk of poverty, are “children and youth; families with more than one child; single parent families; and Indigenous Australians”.<sup>17</sup>

Between 1984 and 1999, the top 20 per cent of wealthy Australians enjoyed a slight increase in their disposable income, while the poorest 20 per cent suffered a 10 per cent slump in disposable income.<sup>18</sup>

Paul VI, and subsequently Pope John Paul II, emphasised that “authentic” or “true” development reaches far beyond the aims of economic growth. True development assists the whole person individually and all people generally, recognising their human rights and respecting the social, cultural and religious dimensions of individuals and their communities.<sup>20</sup>

Caritas Australia and Catholic Mission are agencies of the Church that support projects of this kind within Australia and especially overseas. Their fundraising each year complements the work of many Catholic parishes, schools and other organisations in expressing our human solidarity by funding this type of development as a major key to the cultivation of peace.

The Global Mission program of PALMS Australia aims to reduce poverty by supporting Australian volunteers



Caritas

*‘Justice and human solidarity demand a more balanced distribution of the resources of the earth and the fruits of human endeavour.’*

Fr Joe Caddy, chairman of Catholic Welfare Australia, commented that the report “exposes the myth that if you create good enough economic conditions, then the benefits will trickle down to all”.<sup>19</sup> Justice and human solidarity demand a more balanced distribution of the resources of the earth and the fruits of human endeavour.

The persistence of significant levels of disadvantage in a prosperous nation like Australia demands a concerted response. We repeat the October 2003 call from the Heads of Churches and leaders of the Jewish and Islamic faiths for a commitment from all levels of government for a national strategy for the reduction of poverty and for the elimination of child poverty in Australia. The religious leaders identified the issue of unemployment as an important focus of such a forum, to address the emergence of second and third generation unemployment in Australia and the needs of hundreds of thousands of children in families that have never known an adult in regular employment.

In 1967 Pope Paul VI stated that “development is the new name for peace”. He had in mind the more equitable distribution of the world’s resources and the kind of assistance that enables impoverished communities to become agents of their own economic and social development.

who are willing to share their skills and knowledge and build the capacity of overseas communities who request assistance. The program creates strong links between communities in Australia and abroad.<sup>21</sup>

While many developing countries need to vigorously attack corruption and cronyism, developed countries such as Australia should promote policies to reduce the debt burden that cripples the capacity of many countries to grow. Australia also needs to strongly advocate trade and aid policies that will give developing countries the opportunity to secure the full well-being of their peoples; that is, peace in the abundantly human sense.

### *A culture of peace in the context of national and international security*

Over the centuries followers of Jesus Christ have found the issue of the use of armed force extremely difficult to grapple with. Two streams of thought have emerged: the one forgoing the use of lethal armed force to remedy injustice; the other constraining the use of such force to limited situations with rigorous conditions.<sup>22</sup>

While both approaches are legitimate methods of attempting to be peace-makers in a world marred by violence, the Catholic Church has in recent decades emphasised the presumption against the use of armed



force. Of course, non-combatants must never be the direct and deliberate target of military force.

The Church welcomes the cultivation of moral sensitivity and discernment in these matters and appreciates the Australian legislation that, in the event of conscription, recognises the right to both absolute and selective conscientious objection.

For generations, men and women of the armed forces have unselfishly defended this country and continue to take part in peace-keeping initiatives in many parts of the world. They, more than most, have known the horrors of war and civil unrest. In celebrating the peaceful existence of our nation, it is important that we remember the costs borne by those who have lost their lives, those who mourn the loss of loved ones, and those in our community who continue to suffer the impact of war.

## Terrorism

We are all too aware that the new issues of global terrorism and unilateral intervention require consideration in the light of the principles underlying the Church's reflection on the conduct of armed conflict.

The unleashing of terror against a civilian population can take many forms: maiming and torture; sexual abuse; "ethnic cleansing". In particular, the deliberate killing of innocent civilians is immoral in any circumstances. It is particularly abhorrent when approval or endorsement is offered in the name of religious belief.

*It is a profanation of religion to declare oneself a terrorist in the name of God, to do violence to others in his name.<sup>23</sup>*

Where situations of grave injustice have provided a seedbed for the growth of movements prepared to use terrorist attacks on a civilian population, unstinting

effort to bring about just and beneficial change is needed. Alleviation of the injustice of harsh poverty would reveal the true origin of political terrorism in ethnic rivalry, political ideology, religious conflict, or the lust for power or territory. Responding to the scourge of terrorism in recent years and recognising the challenge this presents for the international community, Pope John Paul II has affirmed the importance of the international legal order. We join with him<sup>24</sup> and UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan<sup>25</sup> in their call for an examination of international law and the renewal of the mechanisms of the United Nations to ensure that effective, collective wisdom may be brought to bear in the response to terrorism.

The recent emergence of unilateral armed intervention, by way of so-called "pre-emptive strikes" or even humanitarian intervention, poses obvious dangers. The imminence or scope of threatened aggression may be exaggerated or simply misread. Claimed benevolence might disguise less worthy motives. The unique legitimacy provided by United Nations authorisation is a protection against the proliferation of the self-serving use of military force.

Recent history reveals other responses aimed at addressing terrorism. Some terrorist attacks on the civilian population, as in Bali in October 2002, have been dealt with by police and security forces so that perpetrators may be pursued through the criminal justice system. Indeed, the collaborative effort by Indonesian and Australian police and intelligence agencies, insofar as it rendered resort to military force unnecessary, is an admirable model.

In responding to these tragic events, the Church recognises also the importance of education as a peaceful means of fighting the war on terror. An education inspired by a respect for human life in all circumstances is an essential way of confirming the reality that "the unity of the human race is a more powerful reality than any contingent divisions separating individuals and people".<sup>26</sup>

*“Let us accept this divine gift of peace and together make something precious of it, cultivating it in every field possible.”*



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Karen Mork



*“The unity of the human race is a more powerful reality than any contingent divisions separating people.”*

### *Peace is possible – peace is our duty*

Our world offers no shortage of examples of war, civil unrest, terrorism and famine. Each day, images of death and human suffering are broadcast into the relative safety of our living rooms through the nightly news. The magnitude of these events and their apparently intractable nature can undermine our sense of optimism that peace is indeed possible. The gravity of terrorist attacks around the globe and the subsequent “war on terror” has had a direct impact on Australians and made the fear of violence more real in our daily lives.

Like the disciples who locked themselves away following the crucifixion of Jesus (John 20:19), so the fear of violence in today’s world can cause us to retreat from our engagement with the world or to lose a sense of hope for a future characterised by peace.

It is, however, into today’s world – into our living rooms – that the risen Christ comes, stands among us and greets us with the words, **“Peace be with you.”** (John 20:20)

In his greeting we find solace in the midst of the tragedies and fears of this world. It is in the risen Christ that we have the reassurance that death has been conquered and all things have been made new. As his disciples, and with the gifts of the Spirit, Christ’s greeting of peace is the basis of our calling to bring the Good News to the world: “As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.” (John 20:21)

Peace is our vocation. We are called to cultivate peace wherever possible – in our families, communities, in national life and even globally. The values of truth, justice, love and freedom, when made real in people’s lives, are dimensions of the abundant peace that the risen Christ brings to his followers and to the world.

Those who bend their efforts to cultivating this peace in the many fields of Australian society and beyond can be reassured by the Divine promise: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.” (Matt 5:9)

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*Peace is not the product of terror or fear.*

*Peace is not the silence of cemeteries.*

*Peace is not the silent result of violent repression.*

*Peace is the generous, tranquil contribution of all to the good of all.*

*Peace is dynamism. Peace is generosity. It is right and it is duty.*

– Archbishop Oscar Romero



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