



# ACSJC BRIEFING

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From the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council, the social justice and human rights agency of the Catholic Church in Australia - [www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au](http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au)

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## FROM THE SECRETARIAT

Dear Friends,

For over thirty years, we have refined our skills of measuring the distribution of wealth and the impact of poverty in Australia. The results of inquiries and studies into poverty have improved our comprehension of human need and the best ways of addressing it. Many of the resulting government initiatives and public services are still regarded as basic entitlements we can rely on in times of need – legal aid, public health, housing, education, family and community services.

We now have an abundance of reports, academic studies and economic models informing us that poverty remains a significant issue in the life of the nation. It would appear that a key requirement of any strategy to address poverty is now to reawaken community awareness and political will.

## SENATE POVERTY INQUIRY

In mid-March, the Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee released its Poverty Report, 'A hand up not a hand out: Renewing the fight against poverty'. There was little fanfare and limited media coverage. One could be forgiven for thinking it was 'just another' report on poverty. Yet, this Inquiry was billed as the most comprehensive and wide-ranging since Sir Ronald Henderson

headed the Commission of Inquiry into Poverty in the early 1970s.

The Senate Committee Inquiry ran for one and a half years, received over 350 submissions and travelled through the country's capitals and regional centres taking evidence. The result was a Report of more than 500 pages (refer: <http://www.aph.gov.au/hansard/senate/committee/S6515.pdf>).

It shows that poverty is becoming more entrenched and complex, that Australia's economic growth has failed to lift many Australians out of poverty and that there has been a widening of the income gap over recent years. Depending on the particular measure of poverty used (e.g. half median income, half average income or Henderson poverty lines), between 2 to 4 million Australians live in poverty. Those most affected include children and youth, families with more than one child, Indigenous Australians and single parent families.

The Report notes that over one million people are in poverty despite living in households where one or more adults are in employment. Over 700,000 children live in homes where no parent works.

## THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Report makes 95 recommendations, many requiring the combined efforts of Federal and State governments. Among the recommendations are strategies for: improving income support payments and removing poverty traps; national job creation targets; improving the circumstances of casual and part-time workers; improving health, housing, education, employment and other services; and upgrading support for particularly vulnerable groups.

In the light of last year's call by the Heads of Churches and leaders of the

Jewish and Islamic Faiths to the Prime Minister and State and Territory Leaders for a national summit on poverty, the recommendations for a comprehensive national anti-poverty strategy (Rec.94) and the establishment of a statutory authority for seeing it through (Rec.95) are significant.

Mr Terry McCarthy, President of St Vincent de Paul's National Social Justice Committee said, "The most important – and welcome – recommendations in the Report are for a national strategy for the alleviation of poverty, particularly child poverty; the calling of a National Forum to draft the strategies and the establishment of an organisation to implement and monitor the strategy." (refer: <http://www.vinnies.org.au>)

In a dissenting Report, 'Balancing the Picture on Poverty', Government Senators claimed that the Majority Report was a purely political attempt to condemn the government of the day. They rejected Recommendations 94 and 95, highlighted the Government's track record on economic and social policy performance, raised concerns about the poverty measures used, and recommended further welfare, labour market and retirement incomes policy reforms.

Fr Joseph Caddy, Chairperson of Catholic Welfare Australia, expressed the sector's disappointment that the Senate Committee failed to reach agreement. He said, "Whilst there is most certainly merit in both the majority and minority sections of the Report, without consensus the reality of any of the recommendations going much further than on the pages of the Document itself is very slim... We still stand firm in our conviction that addressing poverty and financial hardship in this nation will require a unified, non-partisan approach and commitment from all levels of Government, business and the community." (refer:

[http://www.centacare.com.au/media/02\\_11March2004.htm](http://www.centacare.com.au/media/02_11March2004.htm))

### **WHERE TO FROM HERE?**

Has the exercise of measuring and analysing poverty become an end in itself? No matter how important the rediscovery of poverty in its various guises and using different measurements may be, it seems the principal challenge before the

community at this time is to rediscover the 'spirit' of the earlier poverty inquiries. Three decades ago, Ronald Henderson's Commission of Inquiry into Poverty was fired by community dismay over changing economic conditions and falling standards of living for vulnerable citizens. It was also supported by a good measure of non-partisan political will.

There were a number of key values underpinning the 1970s Inquiry that are just as relevant to today's challenge of addressing poverty.

The Henderson Report stressed that we are all responsible for addressing the structural conditions that produce poverty – "Although individual members of society are reluctant to accept responsibility for the existence of poverty, its continuance is a judgement on the society which condones conditions causing poverty." (Commission of Inquiry into Poverty, 1975, 'Poverty in Australia', AGPS, Canberra)

Poverty eradication requires a funding commitment and a level of political will to move beyond particular policy responses to human need to also address questions of distributive justice – "The relief of poverty should be regarded as one of the most important aims of government. This will involve both direct measures to increase the incomes of poor people and welfare services to prevent poverty which should be fitted into a long-term policy for the distribution of the growth of national income."

The human face of poverty must be our point of reference for strategies to address poverty. Commenting on an earlier poverty survey, Henderson warned against becoming overly preoccupied with measurements and statistics – "The results so far have all been stated in terms of an artificial concept, the income unit. As a consequence perhaps they may have lost meaning and impact and it may help to restate them in terms of people, for it is human beings, not concepts or theories, that are the ultimate concern in our study of poverty."

Finally, the Henderson Report left us with this prophetic piece of advice about the need for community awareness and political will – "Progress towards the abolition of poverty will not continue if the subject is allowed to fall out of sight of the general public. We need a continu-

ing program to remind those who are comfortably off of the plight of poor people and what has still to be done.”

Even at this basic level of reawakening community awareness of poverty and fostering the political will to address it more effectively, the national summit proposed in Recommendation 94 of the recent Senate Report is worthy of support and implementation.

In their 1992 Pastoral Statement, 'Common Wealth for the Common Good', the Australian Catholic Bishops also called for a revision of attitudes and structures to address inequality and poverty. This call is as timely as ever – “We have a rich land, a common wealth, and a people who have shown themselves generous and capable of concern for justice in the past. We call upon those same qualities now.”

- John Ferguson (*National Executive Officer*)

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### **LATEST PUBLICATIONS**

(orders Tel: 02 9956 5811 or download an order form from the ACSJC website: <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/CONTENT/PDF/TEMPLATE-ORDERFORM.pdf>)

### **OCCASIONAL PAPER: FROM ETHICS TO SPIRITUALITY**

Catholic Social Justice Series no.49 – Fr Gerard Gleeson reflects on the links between philosophy, theology and Christian spirituality. (Cost \$6.60 + postage).

### **2004 SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR**

The 2004 Social Justice Calendar focuses on the theme “Cultivating a Culture of Peace”. This coincides with the theme for the 2004 Social Justice Sunday Statement.

Cost: \$6.60 (inc. GST), plus postage.  
[http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/content/publications/social\\_justice\\_calendar.html](http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/content/publications/social_justice_calendar.html)

### **POSITION AND INFORMATION PAPER – DETENTION OF AUSTRALIAN CITIZENS AT GUANTANAMO BAY**

Website paper available at:  
<http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/>

Content/publications/positionpapers/2003\_11\_28the\_detention\_of\_australian\_citizens\_at\_guantanamo\_bay.html

### **BACKGROUND PAPER – AUSTRALIA & UNITED STATES FREE TRADE AGREEMENT**

Available on the ACSJC website -  
[http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/Content/publications/positionpapers/2003\\_9\\_5australia\\_&\\_united\\_states\\_free\\_trade\\_agreement.html](http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/Content/publications/positionpapers/2003_9_5australia_&_united_states_free_trade_agreement.html)

(Postage rates for Catholic Social Justice Series Papers: 1 copy \$1; 2-3 copies \$1.45; 4-5 copies \$2.45)

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### **CURRENT ISSUES**

#### **PAPAL ADDRESS TO AUSTRALIAN BISHOPS**

Pope John Paul II recently addressed the Australian Bishops at the conclusion of their ad limina visit to Rome. He acknowledged the contribution of the Church in Australia to the work for justice and solidarity:

“Your leadership in the defense of the fundamental rights of refugees, migrants and asylum seekers, and the developmental support offered to Indigenous Australians, are shining examples of the ‘commitment to practical and concrete love for every human being’ (Novo Millennio Ineunte’ 49) to which I have called the whole Church. Australia’s growing role as a leader in the Pacific region presents an opportunity for you to respond to the pressing need for a careful discernment of the phenomenon of globalization. Vigilant concern for the poor, the abandoned and mistreated, and the globalization of charity will do much to indicate a path of genuine development which overcomes social marginalisation and favors economic benefit for all (cf. Pastores Gregis 69).” (refer: <http://www.zenit.org/english/visualizza.phtml?sid=51327>)

#### **MINISTER ANNOUNCES INCREASE IN REFUGEE NUMBERS**

Asylum Seeker and Refugee advocacy groups have welcomed the announce-

ment of the Minister for Immigration, Senator Amanda Vanstone, of an increase in the size of Australia's humanitarian program. The 23rd March announcement included an increase in the program from 12,000 to 13,000 places. This is the first increase in seven years. The increase includes a 50% increase in the number of refugee places from 4,000 to 6,000. The Government's regional priority will be in Africa, the Middle East and South West Asia in accordance with the resettlement priorities of the UNHCR. (refer: [http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/media\\_releases/media04/v04056.htm](http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/media_releases/media04/v04056.htm))

David Bitel of the Refugee Council of Australia said, "The increase in allocation to the refugee program indicates the government understands the importance to the entrants and to the emerging refugee communities of sharing the responsibilities for helping highly traumatised refugees make new lives in Australia"

Fr John Murphy, Director of the Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office said, "I believe that the announced increase in the humanitarian program will attract a positive response from the community, and certainly from all reasonable and compassionate people".

#### **JUSTICE FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS PAPER: "THE BETTER WAY"**

Justice for Asylum Seekers (JAS) is a network of around 30 Church, welfare and community-based groups, based in Victoria with some national representation also.

In March, JAS released a public information document: The Better Way – refugees, detention and Australians. The document reveals that there are viable alternatives to the current arrangements which are achievable, responsible, affordable and, most importantly, humane. The Better Way is available from the Melbourne Catholic Commission for Justice, Development and Peace (03) 9926 5710 or the ACSJC website: [http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/Content/pdf/risking\\_all\\_in\\_search\\_for\\_human\\_rights2.pdf](http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/Content/pdf/risking_all_in_search_for_human_rights2.pdf)

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## **APRIL NOTICES**

### **PARISH FUNDRAISER, "RAFFLE TO BENEFIT EAST TIMOR"**

Our Lady of Mt Carmel Parish in Wentworthville, Western Sydney, is currently running a raffle to raise funds to purchase a tractor and farming equipment for a village in East Timor. Fr Laurie Timms will be travelling to East Timor mid-year to assist with the purchase of the equipment. Tickets are \$2.00 ea. Or \$20 for a book of 10. Raffle to be drawn on 29 May 2004. Great prizes including a Toyota Echo car valued at \$18,000. To purchase a book of tickets call (02) 9631 8302 or email [mkidson@lacmac.com.au](mailto:mkidson@lacmac.com.au)

### **MARCH 26 - APRIL 11: THEATRE PRODUCTION, "CMI (A Certain Maritime Incident)"**

A show devised from the transcripts of the Senate Select Committee inquiry into the Children Overboard affair. Showing at 'Performance Space', 199 Cleveland St. Redfern, Sydney. (Wed-Sat 8.00pm, Sun 5.00pm). Cost \$20 and concessions. Contact: (02) 9698 7235 or [boxoffice@performancespace.com.au](mailto:boxoffice@performancespace.com.au)

### **APRIL 1: PUBLIC MEETING, "THE DEVIL IN THE DETAIL OF THE USFTA"**

A public meeting to explain the Australia US Free Trade Agreement, with speakers from the AMWU, Public Health Association, Uniting Care & the arts. 6.00pm, Tom Mann theatre, 136 Chalmers Street, Surry Hills, Sydney. (refer:

<http://www.aftinet.org.au/bulletins/latestbulletin.html#3>)

### **APRIL 1-2: CONFERENCE, "GLOBALISATION, FAMILIES AND WORK"**

Meeting the policy challenges of the next two decades". A two-day conference examining the policy options, ideas and underlying values that inform work and family issues. Convened by Families Australia at the Brisbane Convention Centre and Exhibition Centre. Visit this website for cost and booking details (<http://www.familiesaustralia.org.au/>)

**APRIL 2: WORKSHOP, "CHILDREN IN IMMIGRATION DETENTION:**

The policy, the practice and the prognosis" is being held at the Monash Conference Centre, 30 Collins Street, Melbourne, 9.00am to 1.00pm. Speakers: Dr Sev Ozdowski, Julian Burnside QC, Paris Aristotle and many more. (refer: <http://www.law.monash.edu.au/castancenetre/>)

**APRIL 2-3: EVENT, "SIXTH INDIGENOUS ART SHOW AND CULTURAL FESTIVAL"**

presented by the Indigenous Community and Benarrawa Community Development Association at Milperra State High School at Parker Street, Chelmer Qld. Friday 2 April from 7.00pm and Saturday 3 April from 10.00am to 4.00pm. For more information call: (07) 3379 9925

**APRIL 4: CONCERT, "WORLD MUSIC CONCERT"**

, 11.00am to 4.00pm, Hyde Park, Vincent Street, North Perth. Entry by donation – all proceeds to CASE for Refugees. For more details call: (08) 9266 3484

**APRIL 4: RALLY, "PALM SUNDAY MARCH & RALLY FOR PEACE"**

Gather at Belmore Park, Sydney, for Palm Sunday service and multi-faith prayers for peace. Then march to Hyde Park North. Speakers include Sharan Burrow and Andrew Wilkie. Organised by Sydney Peace and Justice Coalition. Sponsored by NSW Ecumenical Council. (refer:

<http://www.chilout.org/events/index.html> )

**APRIL 4: EVENT, "OUT OF LIMBO". BALMAIN FOR REFUGEES**

and Leichhardt Council invite you to join John Doyle, Bryan Brown, Rachel Ward and Henri Szeps at a Sydney harbour side event featuring food, wine and music. In support of the Temporary Protection Visa Legal Project. Tickets: \$50. Call: (02) 9810 4276. (refer: [http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/html/news\\_and\\_events/news\\_and\\_events.html](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/html/news_and_events/news_and_events.html))

**APRIL 4-6: SEMINARS: "REMEMBER RWANDA:**

10 years after the genocide". A series of events in Sydney sponsored by the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the Rwandan genocide that began on 7 April 1994. (refer: <http://www.arts.usyd.edu.au/centres/cpac/seminars.htm>)

**APRIL 5: FORUM, "REFUGEES... AND THE POLITICS OF FEAR"**

The Western Sydney Peace Groups is holding a forum at 7.15pm, Rooty Hill Uniting Church, 86 Rooty Hill Rd North, Western Sydney. Tanya Plibersek MP (Federal Member for Sydney) Mark Goudkamp (Refugee Action Coalition NSW) and Sally McManus (Australian Services Union) will address the gathering. (refer: [http://www.ajustaustralia.com/whatshapening\\_events.php](http://www.ajustaustralia.com/whatshapening_events.php))

**APRIL 6: PUBLIC ADDRESS, "ISLAM AND PEACE"**

Pax Christi AGM and public address by Fr Patrick McInerney. AGM begins at 6.30pm at St Mary's Catholic Church, 21 Swanson Street, Erskinville, Sydney. The AGM will be followed by the address at 7.45pm. Everyone is invited to come along and invite a friend who might be interested. RSVP by 4th April. Contact Fr Claude Mostowik (02) 9550 3845 or Gill Burrows (02) 9922 2927.

**APRIL 6: FORUM, "GENE TECHNOLOGY AND FREE TRADE FORUM"**

Event sponsored by Now We The People. Speakers include Colleen Ross, Women's Vice President of the National Farmers Union of Canada and Dr Pat Ranald, Australian Fair Trade & Investment Network. 6.00 to 8.00pm, Tom Mann Theatre, 136 Chalmers St, Surry Hills, Sydney. Entry by gold coin donation. (refer: <http://www.erc.org.au/events/1080192193.shtml>)

**APRIL 6-7: CONFERENCE, "A JUST AND SUSTAINABLE SOUTH AUSTRALIA"**

Two day conference in Adelaide and convened by the Office of Sustainability to determine a future combining economic progress with protection of the environment and promotion of social equity. (refer: <http://www.ccsa.asn.au>)

**APRIL 14-15: RETREAT, "A DEEP GREEN RETREAT".** Bush walks and talks, workshops, conversation, reflection and meditation – with Fr Sean McDonagh and members of Catholic Earthcare Australia. The Wooglemal Bush Retreat, Oakdale (14 km west of Picton), NSW. Cost: \$65. For bookings call (02) 9956 5800.

**APRIL 14-18: CONFERENCE, "COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE GRASSROOTS",** a conference exploring the role of community development today at Hotel Y, 489 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne. For further info call Deakin University Arts Faculty on (03) 5227 2113 (refer: [http://coss.net.au/events/acoss/1073867854\\_9238\\_20040112.jsp?subsite=acoss](http://coss.net.au/events/acoss/1073867854_9238_20040112.jsp?subsite=acoss))

**APRIL 16-18: CONFERENCE, "LIVING THE DREAM".** The 2nd National Catholic Family Gathering will take place at St Joseph's College, Hunters Hill, Sydney. Organised by the Family Working Group of the Bishops' Committee for the Family and for Life. Book before March 12 for early-bird rates. (refer: <http://www.familygathering.com.au>)

**APRIL 21: EVENT, "THE KIRSTY SWORD-GUSMAO ALOLA FOUNDATION BENEFIT NIGHT".** A tribute for Timorese Women and the late Timor rights activist Dr Andrew McNaughtan. Sydney Town Hall, 7.00 to 11.00pm (refer: <http://www.alolafoundation.org>)

**APRIL 22: FORUM, "PRISON AND POST-RELEASE EDUCATION: What's going on & where are we going?"** The first of a three-part series organised by the Centre for Popular Education to explore the ideas of stakeholders in the field of education of prisoners, ex-prisoners and those at risk of imprisonment. 10.00am to 4.30pm, Building 10, 235 Jones Street, Broadway, University of Technology, Sydney. Cost: \$50. (refer: <http://www.cpe.uts.edu.au/forums/index.html>)

**APRIL 29: FUNDRAISING DINNER, "THE UNITY WE SEEK: Have we stopped looking?"** at the Canterbury Park Events Centre, King Street Can-

terbury, Sydney. 7.00 for 7.30pm. The Most Rev. Dr Peter Carnley AO and the Most Rev John Bathersby will address Christian unity issues in the light of Anglican – Roman Catholic conversations. Cost: \$70. For bookings call: (02) 9299 2215.

**APRIL 30: EVENT, "EAST TIMOR CHARITY DINNER",** forcenet and the National Council of Churches of Australia are holding a charity dinner to raise funds for food security projects in East Timor. 7.00pm at the Blaxland Ballroom at the Swissotel, Sydney. Cost: \$140. For bookings call (02) 9299 2215 or [ajackson@ncca.org.au](mailto:ajackson@ncca.org.au). (Refer: [http://www.ncca.org.au/Home/right\\_column?p=809](http://www.ncca.org.au/Home/right_column?p=809))

*(email news of your forthcoming social justice event by the last week of each month to: [admin@acsjc.org.au](mailto:admin@acsjc.org.au))*

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## MARCH NEWS MONITOR

**COMMISSION HIGHLIGHTS PLIGHT OF ENVIRONMENTAL REFUGEES:** Brisbane's Catholic Justice and Peace Commission said an estimated 25 million people have already been forced to leave their homes because of environmental crises such as rising sea levels.

**POPE CONDEMNS USE OF CHILD SOLDIERS:** Pope John Paul deeply regretted the use of child soldiers in world conflicts, saying they were "victims twice over" and were "overwhelmed by the hatred of adults".

**POPE CALLS FOR PRAYER TO AVOID REPEAT OF RWANDA GENOCIDE:** Ten years after the outbreak of the conflict that led to genocide in Rwanda, Pope John Paul II called for prayer and peace initiatives to prevent a repeat of the tragedy.

**CATHOLIC WELFARE ALARM AT TALK OF GOVT WELFARE CUTS:** Catholic Welfare Australian chairman Fr Joe Caddy expressed concern at Federal Opposition claims that the

Government is looking to cut welfare payments for single mothers and disability pensioners.

**POPE BACKS AUSTRALIAN BISHOPS ON REFUGEES, SOCIAL JUSTICE:** Pope John Paul II used his address to the Australian Bishops to acknowledge the leadership of the Catholic Church in Australia in defence of asylum seekers and indigenous peoples, while urging strength in the face of growing secularism.

**CHURCH BODY URGES \$26.60 PER WEEK MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE:** The Minimum Wage should be increased by \$26.60 per week, the Australian Catholic Commission for Employment Relations (ACCER) told the Safety Net Wage Review hearing.

**ACU REFUSES TO RAISE HECS FEES:** The Australian Catholic University will not increase HECS levels next year, bucking the pattern of universities raising fees by 25%, the maximum allowed under the Federal Government's higher education changes.

**REFUGEE INCREASE WINS CHURCH PRAISE:** Fr John Murphy of the Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office welcomed Immigration Minister Amanda Vanstone's announcement this week of an increase in the humanitarian program for 2004-05 from 12,000 to 13,000 places.

**REGIONAL QUEENSLAND RACISM ALERT:** A Toowoomba Diocesan official spoke of an African refugee family's life of fear amidst "consistent attacks from local residents".

**ACU DELIVERING HIGHER EDUCATION THAI/BURMA BORDER REFUGEES:** The Australian Catholic University launched a project to deliver higher education to the Karen people on the Thai-Burma border.

**CARITAS FIGHT FOR COMPUTER COMPONENT WORKERS' RIGHTS:** A campaign organised by CAFOD, the Caritas affiliate for England and Wales, forced IBM to respond to demands for

better conditions for electronics workers in Mexico, Thailand and China.

**REPORT SHOWS ACU'S PROPHETIC ROLE IN PAID MATERNITY LEAVE:** A new report documents the impact the Australian Catholic University's maternity leave provision had on the public debate on parental leave as well as the broader debate on family-friendly workplace policies.

**BISHOP HONOURS PROMISE TO TAKE DETAINEES' MESSAGE TO POPE:** Port Pirie Bishop Eugene Hurley fulfilled a promise he made to detainees at South Australia's Baxter detention centre to convey their love and prayers directly to Pope John Paul II.

**POPE RAISES REFUGEE QUESTION WITH HOBART ARCHBISHOP:** Archbishop Adrian Doyle of Hobart said that Pope John Paul II raised the question of refugees during an audience at the Vatican.

**JESUIT SAYS DISHONEST POLITICS MAKING AUSTRALIA A TERROR TARGET:** Human rights lawyer Fr Frank Brennan said Australians must question the Prime Minister's denial that last week's Madrid train bombs demonstrate that Australia is a special target of terrorist groups.

**SOCIAL ACTION OFFICE GEARING UP FOR FEDERAL ELECTION:** The Social Action Office (SAO) of the leaders of Queensland's religious congregations is planning an extensive lobby on social justice issues during the federal election campaign later this year.

**VINNIES SHOCKED BY GROWING RICH/POOR DIVIDE:** The St Vincent de Paul Society was disturbed by Senate Inquiry findings that the gap between rich and poor is widening, and also that the scope of poverty is more than merely low income.

**INTERCHURCH CALL FOR REFLECTION ON REDFERN RIOTS:** An ecumenical Indigenous body called for a period of national reflection in the wake of February's tragic death of 17-year-old Thomas 'TJ' Hickey, and the

riots that followed in the Indigenous neighbourhood in Sydney's inner-city Redfern.

**CATHOLIC HEALTH SAYS GOVT SAFETY NET WON'T CATCH ALL:**

Catholic Health Australia CEO Francis Sullivan welcomed the Government compromise that enabled the passing of Medicare legislation, but the universal insurance scheme needs more funding so that some people don't fall through the gaps.

**VATICAN PLEA AT UN FOR GREATER ROLE FOR WOMEN:**

An increased role for women will benefit a society that is "organised solely according to the criteria of efficiency and productivity or of brute force," the Vatican said in a statement presented at United Nations headquarters in New York.

**MARTINO SAYS MARKET A FRIEND BUT NOT AN IDOL:**

Cardinal Renato Martino said that business has a key role in the common good and should not be seen as "the enemy".

**JESUIT STUDY CONFIRMS POST-CODE INFLUENCE ON SOCIAL DIVIDE:**

Some areas of Victoria and NSW have far greater numbers of disadvantaged persons than others, according to a new report released by the policy office of the Melbourne-based Jesuit Social Services.

**COMMISSION SAYS BOAT ARRIVALS NO EXCUSE FOR SCARE-MONGERING:**

Public faith in the integrity of the refugee program is being put at risk by its scaremongering about boat arrivals, according to the Commission for Justice Development and Peace of the Melbourne Archdiocese.

**POPE'S SPEECH REFLECTS CONCERN OVER PRIVATISATION OF WATER:**

Pope John Paul II called water a "gift of God" and a "right of all", insisting that it is "necessary to pay attention to the problems that derive from its evident scarcity in many parts of the world".

**US BISHOPS REGRET BUSH U-TURN ON LANDMINES BAN:**

The Catholic Bishops have responded to the US Government's decision to pull back on its earlier commitment to join more than 150 other nations in banning the use of antipersonnel landmines in war zones.

**STUDY SHOWS FEES FORCING POOR STUDENTS OUT OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS:**

Poorer Catholic families in Victoria are struggling to send their children to the state's Catholic schools in the face of rising fees due to lack of state government funding.

- courtesy Church Resources' CathNews, stories in detail at <http://www.cathnews.com/news/403>

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**APRIL SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR**

**APRIL 11 EASTER SUNDAY**

After the resurrection, Jesus Christ missioned his disciples:

*Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.*

*We are missioned with these same words.*

*How can we cultivate a culture of peace?*

*How can we develop a spirituality of reconciliation and active non-violence?*

*How can we address the expression of violence: both direct and structural, in our homes, our communities, society, Australia, the world?*

*How can we move away from an attitude of domination and competition into a spirit of cooperation and sharing?*

**APRIL 11 PACEM IN TERRIS (PEACE ON EARTH)**

The world will not be in peace until peace has found a home in the heart of every person. John XXIII, Pacem in Terris

John XXIII identified the essential conditions for peace in four precise requirements of the human spirit: truth, justice, love and freedom:

*Truth will build peace if all individuals sincerely acknowledge not only their rights, but also their own duties towards others.*

*Justice will build peace if in practice all of us respect the rights of others and actually fulfil our duties towards them.*

*Love will build peace if people feel the needs of others as their own and share what they have with others, especially the values of mind and spirit which they possess.*

*Freedom will build peace and make it thrive if, in the choice of the means to that end, people act according to reason and assume responsibility for their own actions.*

*- John Paul II, 1 Jan. 2003, Homily in the Mass for the World Day of Peace*

#### **APRIL 18 ALBERT EINSTEIN**

Einstein was born in Germany in 1879 and died in the USA in 1955. Recognised as a leading scientific thinker in his time, he received the Nobel Prize in 1921 for his 1905 work on the photoelectric effect. One week before his death, Einstein signed his last letter. It was a letter to Bertrand Russell in which he agreed that his name should go on a manifesto urging all nations to give up nuclear weapons. He had made many contributions to peace during his life, and one of his last acts was to argue, as he had done all his life, for international peace.

*"The world is not dangerous because of those who do harm, but because of those who look at it without doing anything." - Albert Einstein*

#### **APRIL 24 THE UNITED NATIONS**

The United Nations, in a series of actions and publications to launch the 21st Century, has called for a transition from the culture of war to a culture of peace. The culture of peace provides an alternative to the escalating cycle of violence in the world, including the September 11 attacks in the United States and the subsequent attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq and the bombing in Bali. Cycles of violence are not new, but the same species that invented war is capable of inventing peace.

The United Nations invites us to reflect on what is needed to have a war: an enemy, armaments, a society in which people follow orders, a belief that power can be maintained through violence, control of information (secrecy, propaganda). If

any of these is missing, there cannot be a war. Three other important aspects of the culture of war are: profitability, male domination and education for war. There is only one way out from the cycle of violence, and that is,

#### **A CULTURE OF PEACE**

*instead of enemy images*

*- understanding, tolerance and solidarity instead of armaments*

*- disarmament, universal and verifiable instead of authoritarian governance,*

*- democratic participation*

*instead of secrecy and propaganda*

*- the free flow and sharing of information instead of violence*

*- dialogue, negotiation, rule of law and active non-violence*

*instead of male domination*

*- the equality of women*

*instead of education for war*

*- education for peace*

*instead of exploitation of the weak and of the environment*

*- economies of peace with equitable, sustainable development.*

#### **APRIL 26 DEATH OF BISHOP JUAN GERARDI CONEDERA**

Bishop Gerardi was auxiliary bishop of Guatemala City and coordinator of the Archbishop's Office for Human Rights. For three years he had been working with victims of human rights abuses in compiling a massive report entitled "Guatemala Never Again". The report documented in detail 55,000 cases of human rights abuses, of which nearly 80% were carried out by the army over 36 years of civil conflict. A devastating critique of the Guatemalan military, it was launched by the Guatemalan bishops. Two days later, Bishop Gerardi was battered to death in his home. In June 2001, three members of military intelligence were convicted of his murder. A priest was convicted as an accessory to the crime. In addition, the court ordered additional investigations into another 12 members of the military. A dozen witnesses or potential witnesses were murdered in the course of the investigation. In October 2002, a court of appeals overturned the convictions and ordered a new trial.

*"Truth is the primary word that makes it possible for us to break this cycle of death and violence and to open ourselves to a future of hope and light for all." - Bishop Gerardi speaking at the launch of Guatemala Never Again*

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