



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

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FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear Friends,

Below is the text of a Pastoral Letter issued to mark the Feast of St Joseph on 1st May, which I invite you to consider and circulate in your parish and local communities:

THE HUMAN COSTS BEHIND THE OFFICIAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

This pastoral letter marks the Feast of St Joseph the Worker, which we celebrate in an environment of apparent prosperity and wealth. For many Australians these are bountiful times; unemployment, we are officially told, is now at its lowest since 1981. It has even been suggested that Australia is within reach of full employment.

On this Feast Day, when the faithful are reminded of the dignity of human work, the Church draws attention to the significant number of Australians who have not enjoyed a fair share of the national prosperity. Consideration of the circumstances of people who are under-employed or excluded from the labour market but who are not included in the

official unemployment statistics would provide a more sober assessment of our nation's economic performance.

BEHIND THE OFFICIAL STATISTICS

One of the fundamental realities of recent economic change is that, despite a decade of high economic growth, Australia's performance in providing full-time jobs has been poor. Indeed, there have been periods of 'record growth' when full-time employment has declined. It has been the growth in part-time and casual employment, much of it insecure and poorly paid, which has bolstered the overall employment figures.

In such a setting the 'official' rate of unemployment is far less meaningful than when full-time employment was a more typical pattern of work.

While 'official' unemployment has been falling, the concentration of 'work rich' and 'work poor' households has been intensifying. The true extent to which people are excluded from employment is much higher than the official rate. When the numbers of official unemployed are added to those who are 'under-employed' and to discouraged jobseekers, the official rate of under 6% would more than double to around 13%.

The fact that there are 1.3 million Australians who are unemployed or under-employed presents a serious challenge to the value the Church places on the importance of work in the lives of individuals and families.

In his 1981 encyclical, *Laborem Exercens*, Pope John Paul II presents work as being integral to the life and development of the human person, who is destined to share in the making of the world. To the extent that our society allows unemployment and underemploy-

ment to continue at these levels, we are denying a significant number of our citizens their rightful dignity as human beings and withholding the means to participate in the life of the community.

That such a denial should occur in Australia following a decade of record growth is all the more unacceptable.

HUMAN COSTS OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT

Between 1990 and 2003, Australia increased its production of goods and services by nearly 50%, while its population grew by 16%; yet only 9% more people had full-time jobs. When the situation is stated in these terms, many remain unmoved. However, the picture becomes clearer when we discover some of the human costs of the relative decline in full-time work and the resulting unemployment and underemployment.

The Church has a great concern for the wellbeing of families – particularly those living in poverty. This concern encompasses those conditions of economic change that reduce the job and income security necessary for family living.

CHILDREN IN POVERTY

The Report of the recent Senate Inquiry into Poverty and Financial Hardship revealed that poverty resulting from unemployment – particularly child poverty – remains a significant problem in Australia.

Since the early 1990s, the proportion of children in jobless households, depending on what period we look at, has been falling only marginally, remaining constant, or actually increasing. Together with the stagnation of full-time employment, the problem of 'jobless growth' has resulted in a situation in which a staggering one in six Australian children now lives in a jobless household.

Many families remain in poverty because of the inadequacies of an income support system that is no substitute for a family wage. How can we celebrate Australia's economic achievements while 700,000 children in poverty are denied a decent future?

WORKING IN POVERTY

Not long ago, it could be said with some confidence that finding a job and receiving a wage was the surest way for a fam-

ily to escape poverty and stay out of poverty. For many, this is no longer the case.

Around one million Australians are in poverty despite living in households where one or more adults are in employment. The growth of casual employment to around 27% of the labour force (or 2.2 million people), and the insecure and low paid nature of many jobs, has contributed to 'working poverty'.

The minimum wage is regarded as inadequate to the needs of a family, but irregular hours can result in people earning less than the minimum. The recent poverty inquiry showed that low-paid workers – particularly women and young workers – are most susceptible to poverty. As a nation we need to consider ways to improve the security of these jobs and the adequacy of their remuneration.

FAMILY FORMATION

Another feature of persistent unemployment and the lack of secure and adequately paid employment is its impact on the structure of the family.

Without the economic security that comes with employment that is stable, adequately remunerated, and offering the prospect of progression, many couples find the cost of starting a family prohibitive.

The collapse of full-time work and the persistence of long-term unemployment have had a particularly harsh impact on young men. Recent research by Professor Sue Richardson of the National Institute of Labour Studies has revealed that over the past 25 years, there has been a fall from 70% to 50% of men aged 25-34 getting married, holding a job, and setting up a family. Over the same period, male full-time employment in the prime working age group has fallen by 10%.

If this trend could be wholly attributed to voluntary choices to become the subsidiary income earners of their household, or full-time homemakers, there would be no cause for concern. The much higher rates of unemployment among unmarried men, however, suggest that any voluntary component of this trend is small indeed. Typically, unmarried men have an unemployment rate around

three times that of married men of the same age.

This reality, combined with the trend of an increasing proportion of men never marrying, suggests that those who cannot gain full-time employment have fewer prospects of becoming marriage partners and fathers. In an economic and social environment such as this fewer men can hope to emulate the example of St Joseph: husband and father, working in dignity and supporting a family.

A NATIONAL RESPONSE TO WORKERS AND FAMILIES IN NEED

On the Feast of St Joseph the Worker we celebrate the importance of work to the human person – to the whole person, to the family and to the common wealth of our nation. We remember those who are denied their rightful claim to work and to the kind of work that rewards effort, supports family living and enables participation in the life of the community.

We cannot be content with our nation's economic performance while so many are unemployed or underemployed. The challenges are complex and the solutions will necessarily be multifaceted. There can be legitimate disagreement about solutions to these problems. However, we will fail to find adequate solutions if we do not acknowledge the true extent of a problem that is hidden behind the official overall unemployment statistics.

The recent Senate Poverty Inquiry recommended a national summit on poverty involving all levels of government and sectors of the community to develop a comprehensive anti-poverty strategy.

Today, we repeat the earlier call, in 2003, from the heads of Christian churches and leaders of the Jewish and Islamic faiths for a national forum on poverty. They identified as an important focus 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.

*Bishop Christopher Saunders
Bishop of Broome
Chairman, ACSJC*

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>)

FEAST OF ST JOSEPH THE WORKER: THE HUMAN COSTS BEHIND THE OFFICIAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

Download the Pastoral Letter from the ACSJC website - http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/content/issues/the_human_costs_behind_the_official_unemployment_rate.html (or go to <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au> and click on 'issues')

OCCASIONAL PAPER: FROM ETHICS TO SPIRITUALITY

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

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](http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/Content/publications/positionpapers/2003_9_5a_australia_&_united_states_free_trade_agreement.html)

BACKGROUND PAPER – AUSTRALIA & UNITED STATES FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Available on the ACSJC website - www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/Content/publications/positionpapers/2003_9_5a_australia_&_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)

CURRENT ISSUES

MEDIA RELEASE – THE HUMAN COSTS BEHIND THE OFFICIAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATE – 29 April 2003

Media release issued on the launch of the Pastoral Letter marking the Feast of St Joseph the Worker (<http://www.acsjc.org.au/content/mediareleases.html>)

NATSIEC – ON THE ABOLITION OF ATSIC

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission (NATSIEC) of the National Council of Churches in Australia has condemned the decision by the Federal Government to abolish the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC). NATSIEC acknowledges that ATSIC is in need of structural reform as reported in the ATSIC Review. However, abolishing ATSIC and replacing it with a non-elected advisory body flies in the face of the principles of self-determination and the democratic process. (refer:

http://www.ncca.org.au/Home/right_column?p=850)

CARITAS RUSHES AID TO NORTH KOREA DISASTER

Caritas is rushing aid to victims of the recent train explosion in Ryongchon County, North Korea. Casualty figures provided by the North Korean government are 154 dead and 1300 injured, but it is feared that the actual number of victims may be much higher. After learning of the disaster, Caritas offered assistance such as drugs, medical supplies and other relief goods for the victims and their families. Within eight hours, a message was received from the Flood Damage Rehabilitation Committee thanking Caritas for the concern and expressing gratefulness and appreciation for the help offered. If you would like to make a donation to the work of Caritas Australia please call 1800 024 413.

<http://www.caritas.org.au/newsroom/2004/april27.htm>

JUSTICE FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS PAPER: “THE BETTER WAY”

In March, Justice for Asylum Seekers released 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

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL RESOURCES

Amnesty International Australia has produced a series of web-based resources for schools that deal with the campaign for permanent protection, children and families out of detention and information on TPVs. This information can be accessed at: http://www.amnesty.org.au/whats_happening/refugees/resources/for_schools

MAY 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

APRIL 22 – MAY 30: PLAY, "IN OUR NAME". Tells the true story of the Al Abaddi family: their escape from violent persecution in Iraq and their attempts to find a secure and peaceful home in Australia. Belvoir Street Theatre, Surry Hills, Sydney. Contact: (02) 9699 3444 or http://www.belvoir.com.au/310_whatson_upstairs.php

MAY – JUNE: SBS TV SERIES, "ETHICS OF JOURNALISM – FINE LINE". A documentary series by Ellen Fanning looking at the working life of well-known journalists and the difficult ethical judgements they make. The series will be broadcast at 7.30pm on SBS TV on: 28 April; 5,12,19 May; 2 & 9 June. An accompanying study guide can be downloaded at: <http://www.metromagazine.com.au/metro/frm.htm?highlight=2>

MAY 3: PUBLIC FORUM, "CHILOUT INFORMATION NIGHT ON NAURU". Chilout is convening an information night that will be addressed by Democrats Leader Senator Andrew Bartlett. Held at 7.30pm at St James' Anglican Church Hall, Level 1, 169-171 Phillip Street, Sydney. (refer:

<http://www.chilout.org/files/ChiloutFlyer2004-05.doc>)

MAY 3: PUBLIC LECTURE, "BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS". A lecture by Prof David Weissbrodt, former member of the UN Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, 6pm, Leo Cussen Institute, 1st Floor Lecture Theatre 360 Little Bourke Street, Melbourne (refer: http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/html/news_and_events/news_and_events.html)

MAY 4: STUDY AND ACTION PROGRAM, "FROM VIOLENCE TO WHOLENESS". Therese Douglas is coordinating this program in the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese from St Paul's Church in Rutherford. "From Violence to Wholeness" is devised by the Pace e Bene Franciscan Non-Violence Centre in the U.S. The program offers both a theological vision of non-violence and techniques for use in daily life. The Program will be run every second Tuesday evening from 7.30pm in St Paul's Meeting Room, Rutherford. Cost: \$27.50 for resource book. Contact: (02) 4932 0544 or (02) 4930 1603.

MAY 6: PUBLIC FORUM, "WEAPONS OF MASS DISTRACTION". Former Intelligence Officer, Andrew Wilkie addresses Australia's involvement in the unilateral intervention into Iraq and directions taken by Australia in international affairs. 7.00pm, Fly By Night Club, No.1 Holdsworth Street, Freemantle, Perth. Cost: \$15 waged, \$10 unwaged. (refer: <http://www.active.org.au/perth/calendar/?day=6&month=5>)

MAY 6 – 27: COURSE, "AN INTRODUCTION TO HUMAN RIGHTS", convened by the Edmund Rice Centre on Thursday evenings from 6.00 to 8.30pm at the Aquinas Academy, 141 Harrington Street, The Rocks, Sydney. This course will examine the scope and nature of human rights from a variety of perspectives. It will consider the core human rights documents and the international legal framework that supports them. (refer:

http://www.erc.org.au/new/short_courses.htm)

MAY 10: PUBLIC LECTURE, "A PERSONAL JOURNEY". Richard Franklin talks about his life as an Indigenous person, his time as an investigator with the Royal Commission into Black Deaths in Custody, his film making and music, whilst sharing his personal perspective on current Indigenous issues. Convened by RMIT University, 10.00 to 12.00 noon, Building 94, Cardigan Street, Carlton Library, Melbourne. Contact (03) 9926 4885 for further details.

MAY 14 – 23: EVENTS, "LANDMINE ACTION WEEK". The objectives of Land Mine Action Week 2004 are: to raise awareness of the issues; lobby the Australian Government to contribute \$150 million over 10 years for the rehabilitation of victims and the removal of landmines in our region. For information on the events that will be held throughout Australia during this week, visit: <http://www.landmine-action-week.org>

MAY 15: PEACEFUL PROTEST, "FLOTILLAS OF HOPE 2004". A diverse group of people are taking to the seas to draw attention to the plight of the 264 people (93 of those children) interned by the Australian Government on Nauru. The protest, will set sail from Australia mid-May, arriving on Nauru on the 20th June (World Refugee Day). (refer: http://www.ajustaustralia.com/whatshappening_events.php)

MAY 16: WORLD DEBT DAY, "JUBILEE SUNDAY". Jubilee Australia has produced information and campaign material for World Debt Day. (refer: http://www.jubileeaustralia.org/files/_750_newsletters/Supplementary%20newsletter.pdf)

MAY 23: COMMUNITY DIALOGUE, "OPEN MINDS, OPEN DOORS: Muslims and Christians sharing common values and living together in friendship".

The Manly Catholic Social Justice Group, Islamic Society of Manly and MRA-Initiatives of Change are convening a community event starting at 3.00pm at Cromer Community Centre, 150 Fisher Road North, Dee Why, Sydney. Chaired by Dr Peter McDonald, Mayor of Manly, with speakers including Bishop Kevin Manning, Abdalla Eissa (Islamic Society of Manly) and Wendie Wilkie (Uniting Church National Assembly). Entry by donation. Contact: (02) 9977 6616) or paletto@bigpond.com

MAY 25: PUBLIC LECTURE, "INAUGURAL RECONCILIATION LECTURE" to be delivered by Patrick Dodson, 6.00pm, Great Hall, Parliament House, Canberra (refer: www.antar.org.au/_events.html)

MAY 26: NATIONAL EVENTS, "NATIONAL SORRY DAY AND THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR RECONCILIATION". Events being held around the nation to commemorate the ongoing Journey of Healing can be found at the following websites: <http://www.alphalink.com.au/~rez/Journey/happening.htm> <http://www.reconciliationaustralia.org/reconciliation/nrw.html>

MAY 29: OPENING, "STOLEN GENERATIONS MEMORIAL". The opening of the Stolen Generations memorial will be celebrated from 11.00am at Reconciliation Place, King Edward Terrace (next to High Court, Canberra). (refer: www.antar.org.au/_events.html)

MAY 29: MEETING, "SOCIAL JUSTICE GATHERING FOR THE ARCHDIOCESE OF BRISBANE". The Catholic Justice and Peace Commission of Brisbane is convening a gathering for social justice representatives from the parishes of the Archdiocese to deal with the three major themes of National Reconciliation, the treatment of asylum seekers, and the relationship between Christians and Muslims. Fr Frank Brennan SJ will be speaking at this event. Beginning with lunch at 12.30pm and concluding with Eucharist at 6.00pm. Contact the Commission Office

for further details: (07) 3891 5911 or
cjpc@uq.net.au (refer:
<http://www.uq.net.au/cjpc/index.html>)

MAY 29: PUBLIC FORUM, "JUSTICE FOR HICKS & HABIB". The Western Sydney Peace Group and Canterbury-Bankstown Peace Group are hosting this public event. Hear Maha Habib, Terry Hicks, Stephen Hopper, and guest speakers from the NSW Council of Civil Liberties and Amnesty International discuss the illegal detention of two Australians by the U.S. at Guantanamo Bay. 6.00 to 8.00pm, Granville Youth & Recreation Services, 3 Memorial Drive, Granville, Western Sydney. (refer:
<http://www.active.org.au/sydney/calendar/?day=29&month=5>)

MAY 31: FUNDRAISER, "CHILOUT FUNDRAISER". Children Out of Detention returns to the NSW Nurses Association at 43 Australia Street, Camperdown, Sydney (from 6.00pm). Screening of the Show Mercy video, "Punished Not Protected" and the opportunity to meet Human Rights Commissioner Dr Sev Ozdowski on the eve of the long awaited launch of the HREOC Inquiry into Children In Detention. Cost: \$10.00 (refer:
<http://www.chilout.org/events/index.html>)

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

APRIL NEWS MONITOR

QUEENSLAND DIOCESE BACKS FARMERS SUFFERING UNDER DEREGULATION: The Toowoomba Diocese Social Justice Commission called on all consumers of milk to stand in solidarity with dairy farmers suffering the impact of de-regulation.

CATHOLIC BODY COMMENDS VIC GOVT LOW-INCOME FAMILY SUPPORT: Catholic Social Services Victoria, peak body for 65 community-based welfare organisations, commended the Bracks Government on its pre-budget announcement expanding and reforming concessions for low-income Victorians.

TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF DEMOCRACY IN SOUTH AFRICA: As the world celebrated 10 years of majority rule in South Africa, Caritas Australia congratulated the people of the country for their peaceful transition to democracy.

CAMPAIGNERS CELEBRATE AS IBM UNVEIL CODE OF CONDUCT: IBM adopted a code of conduct for their suppliers following the British Caritas organisation's campaign on extreme working conditions in computer factories in the developing world.

POPE SAYS DEATH PENALTY WON'T DEFEAT TERRORISM: Pope John Paul II said that the promotion of respect for the dignity of the human person - and not the death penalty - will overcome terrorism.

VATICAN OBSERVER CALLS HUMAN TRAFFICKING "WORST RIGHTS VIOLATION": The Vatican's permanent observer at the UN in Geneva Archbishop Silvano Tomasi highlighted the "forced expulsions and violent conflicts" that make up the growing phenomenon of human trafficking.

COMMISSION SAYS AUSTRALIA 'BULLYING' EAST TIMOR: Melbourne's Catholic Commission for Justice Development and Peace has accused the Australian government of making a "greedy grab" for the Timor Sea oil revenue to the detriment of East Timor.

CALL TO END POLICE PURSUITS IN VICTORIA: The death of a motorcyclist west of Melbourne on Friday showed the need for an immediate end to high-speed police pursuits, according to Jesuit Fr Peter Norden.

CARITAS DIRECTOR SAYS RWANDA ANNIVERSARY CHAL-

LENGES ALL: Caritas Australia director said the tenth anniversary of the Rwanda Genocide should prompt all people to consider what they can contribute to communities split by violence.

GENTRIFICATION THREATENING 'BASIC HUMAN RIGHT' OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING: The Office for Peace and Justice of the Chicago Archdiocese called for action to counter the growing threat to poor and working class residents posed by the rapid "gentrification" of housing in inner city areas.

CARITAS CONDEMNATION OF US ATTEMPT TO BLOCK CHEAP AIDS TREATMENT: The British Caritas affiliate CAFOD said attempts by the United States government to force developing countries to use more expensive US approved AIDS drugs in return for aid are totally unacceptable.

- courtesy Church Resources' CathNews, stories in detail at <http://www.cathnews.com/news/404>

MAY SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR

MAY 3 WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY

On every continent, journalists, editors and publishers are murdered, assaulted, detained or harassed. Their publications are censored, fined, suspended and closed down. World Press Freedom Day exists to recognise the sacrifices made in the struggle for freedom of the press and to put pressure on the numerous countries that continue to deny their citizens this basic human right. Last year 46 journalists were murdered in 20 countries and at least 136 journalists are currently imprisoned in 27 countries.

This is also a day on which to remind members of the press of the important duty they have to be professional in

their reporting, always seeking the truth and communicating it with integrity and respect for those of whom they speak and write.

MAY 23 WORLD COMMUNICATIONS DAY

World Communications Day is the only worldwide celebration called for by the Second Vatican Council. Pope John Paul II has chosen The Media in the Family: A Risk and a Richness as the theme of his message for World Communications Day 2004.

The theme chosen by the Holy Father reflects his concern that the media should enrich family life and not damage it.

MAY 26 NATIONAL SORRY DAY

From 1800 to 1970 it was the policy of successive Australian Governments to remove some children from Indigenous families to give them a "better life" which would eventually lead to their assimilation into White Australia. Many persons who were "removed" are still living, but these policies not only affected those directly "removed". Their original families and their children were affected, as well as Aboriginal society, language and culture.

Today, we acknowledge the past hurt and its consequences, make a public apology for this practice, and promise to move forward together on the journey of healing.

MAY 27 NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK

Week of Prayer for Reconciliation and National Reconciliation Week occur between May 27 and June 3. May 27 marks the anniversary of the 1967 referendum in which 92% of Australians voted to include Aboriginal people in the reckoning of the census. June 3 marks the anniversary of the High Court's judgment in the Mabo case in 1992, which recognised Native Title rights of Indigenous people to their lands.

To promote reconciliation and maintain awareness of and respect for the dignity of Indigenous peoples, always acknowl-

edge traditional peoples at every meeting or gathering.

SUGGESTED WORDS OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL PEOPLES

I would like to acknowledge the _____ people, the traditional custodians of the land on which we stand.

This acknowledgement could be said together

We acknowledge and pay respect to the _____ people as the original and ongoing owners and custodians of this land. We commit ourselves to actively work for reconciliation and justice alongside Indigenous people.

Site for identifying the traditional peoples of local areas:

www.foundingdocs.gov.au/pathways/

PRAYER FOR RECONCILIATION

*In the midst of conflict and division,
We know it is you
Who turns our minds to thoughts of peace.
Your spirit changes our hearts:
Enemies begin to speak to one another,
Those who were estranged join hands in friendship,
And nations seek the way of peace together.*

*Let your spirit be at work in us.
Give us understanding and put an end to strife,
Fill us with mercy and overcome our denial,
Grant us wisdom and teach us to learn
From the people of the land.*

Call us to justice.

(ACSJC Prayer Card)

MAY 29 INTERNATIONAL DAY OF UN PEACEKEEPERS

The date, May 29, was chosen because on that day in 1948 the first UN peacekeeping mission, the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation, began operations with a group of unarmed military observers in Palestine. UN peacekeepers won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1988. Today, more than 40,000 peace-

keepers are fulfilling roles as military observers, trainers and disarmament experts, civilian police, civil administrators, judges and prosecutors, economists, human rights and humanitarian workers. Others perform the more traditional peacekeeping functions of monitoring ceasefires and buffer zones. More than 1,800 peacekeepers have lost their lives in the line of duty.

The day is intended to pay tribute to all the men and women who have served and continue to serve in UN peacekeeping operations, as well as to honour the memory of those who have lost their lives in the cause of peace.

While peacekeeping by itself cannot end a war ... it can prevent a recurrence of fighting. Above all, it gives time and space for conflict resolution. It gives peace a chance. UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan

Australian Catholic Social Justice Council Leo XIII House, 19 MacKenzie Street, North Sydney NSW 2060. Tel: (02) 9956 5811, Fax: (02) 9954 0056, Email: admin@acsjc.org.au Website: <http://socialjustice.catholic.org.au> ** ACSJC Briefing is sent by email at the beginning of each month (except January). To subscribe or unsubscribe, go to the front page of the website Comments and contributions are also welcome.