



ACSJC BRIEFING

No. 50 – September 2004

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 NATIONAL EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Dear Friends,

An important date in the Australian Church's social justice calendar occurs during September with the celebration of Social Justice Sunday. This year, Social Justice Sunday is celebrated on Sunday 26th September.

The Australian Catholic Bishops will launch the annual Social Justice Sunday Statement on Wednesday 22nd September. The Statement addresses the issue of peace in our world – both at home and abroad. The Statement is entitled: "Peace Be With You: Cultivating a Culture of Peace".

As Social Justice Sunday approaches, I thought it might be worthwhile to highlight the range of resources that are now available for Social Justice Sunday.

2004 SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY STATEMENT

The scriptural foundation to this year's Statement is from Chapter 20 of the Gospel of John, when Jesus appears to the disciples locked in their room following the Crucifixion. He offers them his peace, commissions them to spread the Good News and bestows the gifts of the Spirit. The shalom greeting "peace be with you" is the basis of their mission.

It is also in our modern world that Christ stands among us and greets us with the same words. In Christ's greeting we find solace in troubling times; a renewal of hope that we can make a difference for peace and, with the gifts of the Spirit, this greeting is the very basis of our calling to bring the Kingdom of God into being in this world.

The Statement highlights different contexts in which we can all cultivate a culture of peace; through family life, progressing National Reconciliation, prayer and dialogue between religions, supporting democratic and multicultural values, promoting national and international development, and considering difficult issues regarding national and international security.

Copies of the Social Justice Sunday Statement can still be ordered through the ACSJC at a very affordable price (<http://www.acsjc.org.au/CONTENT/PDF/SJSS2004OrderForm.pdf>). Alternatively, a free electronic version will be available from Wednesday 22nd September on the websites of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (www.acbc.catholic.org.au) and ACSJC (www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au)

LITURGY NOTES AND TEACHERS' NOTES

A summary of the Statement will be available soon on the ACSJC website.

Along with this summary are the accompanying Liturgy Notes and Teachers' Notes to the Statement.

The Liturgy Notes reflect on the theme of the Social Justice Statement for the 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

The Teachers' Notes draw on particular aspects of the Statement and suggest basic activities that could be undertaken in the classroom environment. It is hoped the notes will assist teachers to spread the Statement's message of peace in Catholic schools. These are free resources that are available at the ACSJC website.

ECUMENICAL JUSTICE KIT – "SECURITY AT ALL COSTS"?

The National Council of Churches has prepared an ecumenical Social Justice Sunday Kit for this year's theme which is titled: "Security At All Costs? A Christian Reflection on Where to Draw the Line". This resource provides a useful guide for group discussions and helps us to think about security, non-violence and peace in our everyday lives.

The kit uses the biblical themes of truth, mercy, justice and community to assist in reflecting on how we can be peace-makers in our daily lives.

Included are liturgical and theological resources from the Christian traditions, ecumenical prayers and case studies. The kit includes suggestions about how to run discussion sessions.

The Ecumenical Social Justice Sunday Kit is now available and can be purchased through the ACSJC. An electronic version of the kit is available for download at the National Council of Churches website (http://www.ncca.org.au/departments/social_justice_network/documents_and_statements/social_justice_sunday_2004)

TEN STEPS TOWARDS CULTIVATING A CULTURE OF PEACE

The next leaflet in the "Ten Steps" series – Ten Steps Towards Cultivating a Culture of Peace – provides practical suggestions that we can take as individuals and in our families, schools, parishes and local communities to foster peace. The leaflet is accompanied by the Prayer Card. Call the ACSJC for further information.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Each year, the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council develops a range of supplementary resources to the Social Justice Sunday Statement for use in

schools, parishes, social justice groups, religious congregations, church agencies and anyone who is interested in spreading the Australian Bishops' message.

I hope the abovementioned resources will assist in your reflection and preparations for Social Justice Sunday. Please feel free to distribute this information through your own networks.

- *John Ferguson (National Executive Officer)*

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>)

2004 SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY STATEMENT – ORDER NOW!

This year's Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Social Justice Sunday Statement is entitled "Peace be with you – Cultivating a Culture of Peace". The Statement will be launched in September prior to Social Justice Sunday on September 26. The ACSJC is now taking orders for the Statement. An order form is available on the ACSJC website:

http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/CONTENT/publications/documentation/documentation_sjs01.html

OCCASIONAL PAPER: THE TIMOR SEA'S OIL AND GAS: WHAT'S FAIR?

Catholic Social Justice Series No.51 – Fr Frank Brennan SJ considers the vexed debate and complex history surrounding current negotiations between Australia and Timor-Leste concerning the resource sharing arrangements and maritime boundaries of the Timor Sea.

Fr Brennan addresses two central questions underpinning these negotiations:

* Should the Parliament of Timor-Leste pass legislation approving an agreement between the governments of Timor-Leste and Australia giving the security needed for the joint ventures to proceed with the Greater Sunrise project next year?

* What is a fair process and a fair outcome for the negotiation of maritime boundaries in the Timor Sea where Timor-Leste has competing interests and conflicting claims with Australia and Indonesia?

He says that Australia, East Timor and Indonesia need to reach agreement on the finalisation of all maritime borders "on the basis of international law in order to achieve an equitable solution – seeking not charity but justice – just a fair go for all three parties, including the one who is the smallest, poorest and newest in the region." (Cost \$6.60 plus postage) (postage rates listed below).

OCCASIONAL PAPER: THE CHURCH AND PUBLIC DEBATE

Catholic Social Justice Series no.50 – Prof. John Warhurst addresses the implications of the issue in the latest paper, *The Church and Public Debate: Reflections on Speaking Out in an Election Year*. (Cost \$6.60 plus postage).

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 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: \$4.40 (inc. GST), plus postage.

http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/content/publications/social_justice_calendar.html

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

CURRENT ISSUES

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE – “POVERTY EMERGES AS POLITICAL ISSUE” – 27 August 2004

Federal Election Candidates will be invited to attend local public forums across the nation to tell voters where they stand on poverty and inequality. The encouraging response to the “Vote [1] No More Poverty” has struck a chord with local communities and has activated people to not only become involved but to take on the role of organising these public forums. Details of public forums will be made available on the No More Poverty website.

(<http://www.nomorepoverty.org.au/mr27082004.php>)

CARITAS AUSTRALIA’S SUDAN CRISIS APPEAL

Caritas Australia needs your help urgently. Those fleeing the campaign of violence in Sudan desperately need food, water, shelter and medical supplies now. Caritas is coordinating an emergency appeal and needs donations to assist people today. Please phone 1800 024 413 to make a donation. For further details and updates regarding Caritas Australia’s advocacy position on events in Sudan, refer: <http://www.caritas.org.au/emergencies/sudan.htm>

PASTORAL LETTER: “LET THE MANY COASTLANDS BE GLAD!”

Let the Many Coastlands be Glad! A beautifully presented booklet from the Queensland bishops on safeguarding the Great Barrier Reef and the waters of the South Pacific. Visit the website of Catholic EarthCare for further details. A donation of \$5 to cover costs and assist the work of Catholic Earthcare Australia is invited. (<http://www.catholicearthcareoz.net/resources.html#COASTLANDS>)

PRE-ELECTION RESOURCES

Visit the ACSJC website for a range of pre-election information and resources. Included is information about the “Vote [1] No More Poverty” campaign; the Australian Catholic Bishops’ statement “Having Faith in Our Democracy: Building a Better Australia”; the ACSJC leaflet “A Vote for Social Justice”.

([http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/Content/issues/vote_\[1\]__no_more_poverty.html](http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/Content/issues/vote_[1]__no_more_poverty.html))

NETACT PRE-ELECTION KIT

NetAct is a network of Catholic social justice, welfare and educational agencies. It has produced a kit which includes a number of Issues Papers with underpinning principles, relevant issues and suggested alternative policies and actions. The NetAct Pre-Election Kit 2004 is available on <http://www.scan.org.au/Templates/Untitled-2.htm>

SEPTEMBER NOTICES

During September: Local Meetings organised through the campaign, "Vote [1] No More Poverty", inviting local candidates to tell voters where they stand on poverty and inequality. Visit these websites for more details: www.nomorepoverty.org.au; www.acsjc.org.au.

AUGUST 8 – SEPTEMBER 27: EXHIBITION, "INNOCENT VICTIMS: Children's Drawings from the Woomera Detention Centre". Depicts the lives of children in our desert detention centre as seen through their eyes – 20 drawings created by children who are, or have been, confined to the Woomera Detention Centre. On show: Mary MacKillop Place Museum, 7 Mount Street, North Sydney. Open daily – 10.00am – 4.00pm (refer: <http://www.sosj.org.au/news/index.asp?nid=74>)

SEPTEMBER 1: PUBLIC LECTURE, "BOATS AND VOTES" by Julian Burnside QC. ACU National Ballarat Campus (Aquinas) is delighted to announce that Julian Burnside will present the 2004 Annual Aquinas Lecture. 8.00pm, ACU National Ballarat Campus (Aquinas), Mulkearns Theatre, 1200 Mair Street, Ballarat. This lecture is free and open to the public. For more details please call (03) 5336 5334. (refer: http://www.acu.edu.au/acu_national/News___Events_Calendar/Events.cfm)

SEPTEMBER 1: PUBLIC ORATION, "HOW DO WE BUILD PATHWAYS TO RECONCILE THE MISTAKES OF THE PAST and ensure we are building communities for the future?" The Hon. Sir William Deane and Patrick Dodson address this important question. Tickets \$44 – profits to Lingiari Foundation. 7.30 pm Swanston Room, Melbourne Town Hall. For bookings call (03) 9530 6615 (refer: http://www.buildingcommission.com.au/asset/1/upload/Oration_Flyer_0411.pdf)

SEPTEMBER 3: PUBLIC ADDRESS, "NO MORE RWANDAS OR DARFURS: The International Responsibility to Protect. The Hon. Gareth Evans AO QC will address this forum organised by the Sydney Peace Foundation and Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies. 9.00am to 10.30am, Eastern Avenue Auditorium, the University of Sydney. RSVP to the Sydney Peace Foundation at spf@arts.usyd.edu.au or call (02) 9351 4468 (refer: <http://www.spf.arts.usyd.edu.au/news.html>)

SEPTEMBER 4 – 5: NATIONAL CONFERENCE, “HUMAN RIGHTS: A PACIFIC AGENDA”. Amnesty International is hosting the inaugural Human Rights Conference aiming to promote dialogue and understanding between key actors in the Pacific region on critical issues affecting the promotion and protection of human rights, including Australia’s role. The Conference will be held at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, South Brisbane. (refer: http://www.amnesty.org.au/whats_happening/hrc)

SEPTEMBER 5: PERFORMANCE, “SOMETHING TO DECLARE: STORIES OF REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS”. Actors for Refugees Qld performance with Fiona Doyle, Jodie Le Vesconte, Marcel Dorney, Emily Tomlins and Sean Dennehy. The play is organised in conjunction with the Amnesty International Australia ACT and Southern NSW Branch. Musical accompaniment will be provided by Tim McLean. Free Event, no bookings required. 2.00pm, St Luke’s Hall, 190 Ekibin Rd, East Ekibin, Brisbane via Bus 112, Stop 30. (refer: <http://www.active.org.au/brisbane/calendar/?display=zoom&event=267>)

SEPTEMBER 5: MARCH, “SUDAN PEACE MARCH” FROM HYDE PARK FOUNTAIN TO MARTIN PLACE, Sydney. March for peace and to increase awareness of the crisis unfolding in the Darfur region of Sudan. Gather in Hyde Park at 11.00am (refer: <http://www.active.org.au/sydney/calendar/?display=zoom&event=2202>)

SEPTEMBER 6: FORUM, “NATIONAL REFUGEE MEN’S HEALTH FORUM”, brings together health workers, academics, NGOs and others from around Australia to focus on the 25% of refugees who are men. The morning session will be devoted to general and theoretical issues, and the afternoon to practice. 8:45am - 5:00pm, NSW Health, 73 Miller St North Sydney. Cost \$55, call: (02) 87780770 (refer: <http://www.chilout.org/events/index.html>)

SEPTEMBER 6 – 27: SEMINARS, “MAWAL ROM PROJECT: CROSS-CULTURAL MEDIATION TRAINING”. Rev Djiniyini Gondarra and Patrick McIntyre will present a series of half-day seminars in each of Australia’s capital cities to stimulate reflection and discussion about ways to value dialogue, diversity and cross-cultural encounters with Indigenous people. Brisbane 6th; Sydney 7th; Melbourne 8th; Canberra 9th; Adelaide 13th; Darwin 15th; Perth 27th. Cost \$110. Call: 0409 177 161. (refer: <http://www.leadr.com.au/MAWUL%20ROM%20SEMINARS%20%20.pdf>)

SEPTEMBER 6 – 8: NATIONAL CONFERENCE, “JUST CARE”. Catholic Health Australia’s annual National Conference, to be held in Adelaide, aims to raise the public’s awareness of the health needs of vulnerable Australians and to explore the contribution the Church makes and can make to improve access to essential care for everyone. Visit CHA website for booking details (refer: <http://www.cha.org.au/conference/index.html>)

SEPTEMBER 7: SEMINAR, "COMMUNITY DISADVANTAGE, RESILIENCE AND SOCIAL COHESION". Prof Tony Vinson discusses the concentration of disadvantage in New South Wales and Victoria, its persistence and the prospects for improving life opportunities in highly disadvantaged areas. 1.00pm to 2.30pm, Room 3.096, Level 3, South Wing, Rupert Myers Building, University of New South Wales, Sydney. Event sponsored by the Social Policy Research Centre. (refer: <http://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au/seminars/2004s2.htm>)

SEPTEMBER 8: PUBLIC LECTURE, "HUMAN RIGHTS AND SECURITY: SECURITY FOR WHOM?" Irene Kahn, Secretary General of Amnesty International will deliver the 2004 Annual Hawke Lecture. 5.15pm to 7.00pm at Adelaide Town Hall, King William Street, Adelaide. (refer: http://www.ajustaustralia.com/whatshappening_events.php)

SEPTEMBER 9: SEMINAR, "RESPECT FOR WOMEN", reviewing the national and global situation for women, discussing equity in employment, access to education and support mechanisms for women subject to violence or discrimination. 8.30am - 2.00pm, Hilton Adelaide Hotel, Adelaide (refer: http://www.ajustaustralia.com/whatshappening_events.php)

SEPTEMBER 9: SEMINAR, "THE EFFECTS OF RACISM ON LEBANESE YOUTH". Centre of Peace and Conflict Studies Researchers Paul White and Fadilla Masri discuss the effects of racism on Lebanese Youth. 12.30 – 2.00pm, CPACS Oval Office, Mackie Building K01, Arundel Street, Glebe, Sydney (across the footbridge over Parramatta Road from the main campus of the University of Sydney) (refer: <http://www.arts.usyd.edu.au/centres/cpacs/seminars.htm>)

SEPTEMBER 10: FORUM, "THE SUDAN CRISIS: A LEGACY OF POST COLONIALISM", addressed by Andrew Vinson, Director of the Centre for Middle Eastern and North African Studies at Macquarie University, and Geoff Hawker & Noah Bassil, Politics and International Relations and Macquarie Uni. 6.00pm to 7.45pm, Politics in the Pub, Gaelic Club, 64 Devonshire Street, Surry Hills, Sydney.

SEPTEMBER 10: FORUM, "UNION AND COMMUNITY ALLIANCES AND COALITION BUILDING". Part of the Popular Education, Activism & Organising series of the Centre for Popular Education, UTS, Sydney. Cost: \$30. 9.00am to 2.00pm, Building 10, (Old Fairfax Building, 235 Jones St, Broadway, Sydney. (http://www.cpe.uts.edu.au/forums/activism_forum_3.html)

SEPTEMBER 11: NATIONAL FORUM, "INDIGENOUS HEALTH & THE TREATY DEBATE: Rights Governance & Responsibility". A national forum at the University of New South Wales, Kensington, Sydney. The cost of the forum is \$99, with discounts for students and unwaged of \$49. (refer: <http://www.gtcentre.unsw.edu.au/2004-Treaty-Conference-Brochure.doc>)

SEPTEMBER 11: PRAYER AND PUBLIC GATHERING, "HEALING THE HEARTS PROJECT" at 10.00am. A gathering at the Esplanade Park, Perth from 9.30 to 10.30am has also been arranged. You are invited to take part in a collective prayer to send healing light and love into the hearts of those involved in terrorist activity. This is an all-embracing project. The vision of this project is to open your heart to the possibility of healing another's. Set a reminder in your mobile for 10 am on that day or put it in your diary and then please forward it to your entire Address Book. (refer: <http://www.cacw.catholic.org.au/news/cww.asp?id=343>)

SEPTEMBER 16 – 25: EVENTS, "THE FREEDOM FESTIVAL" to be held in various States. – Various States. The Freedom Festival is based on the belief that we can all use our Freedom to help fight for the Freedom of others. In FREEDOM 04, Amnesty International Australia is calling for Freedom for all refugees and asylum seekers. Melbourne 16th; Canberra 17th; Sydney 18th; Adelaide 24th; Perth 25th. (refer: http://www.amnesty.org.au/whats_happening/freedom_festival or <http://www.chilout.org/events/index.html>)

SEPTEMBER 18 – 19: CONFERENCE, "AN ISLAND OF PEACE". The Tasmanian Catholic Justice and Peace Commission's Inaugural Social Justice Conference. Hear from Robert Fitzgerald, Fr Michael Tate AO, and Morag Fraser. The conference will bring people together to exchange their ideas and practical solutions in working with social justice issues such as refugees and asylum seekers, poverty, unemployment and Indigenous Reconciliation. Cost: \$22.50. Ph: (03) 6225 1920, email: tcjpc@cdftas.com (refer: <http://www.tasjustice.org>)

SEPTEMBER 19: "CLASSICAL RECITAL IN AID OF CHILDREN IN DETENTION". Daniel Kaan (Tenor) and Pascale Touma (Piano) will be performing Schumann's Dichterliebe ("Poets Love") song cycle, and, with Ann Finlay (Soprano), a variety of music by Puccini, Verdi, Mozart, Schubert and others. 4:00pm, Crows Nest Performing Arts Centre in Holtermann St, Crows Nest, Sydney. Cost \$20 for adults and \$12 for concessions. (refer: <http://www.chilout.org>)

SEPTEMBER 21: SEMINAR, "RECENT TRENDS IN INCOME POVERTY IN AUSTRALIA" by Brice Bradbury. 1.00pm to 2.30pm, Room 3.096, Level 3, South Wing, Rupert Myers Building, University of New South Wales, Sydney. Event sponsored by the Social Policy Research Centre. (refer: <http://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au/seminars/2004s2.htm>)

SEPTEMBER 22: LAUNCH OF 2004 SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY STATEMENT, "Peace Be With You: Cultivating a Culture of Peace" in Sydney.

SEPTEMBER 23: SEMINAR, "GRASSROOTS PEACE BUILDING IN SRI LANKA". Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies Student, Andrew Mason addresses this issue. 12.30 – 2.00pm, CPACS Oval Office, Mackie Building K01, Arundel Street, Glebe, Sydney (across the footbridge over Parramatta Road from the main campus of the University of Sydney) (refer: <http://www.arts.usyd.edu.au/centres/cpacs/seminars.htm>)

SEPTEMBER 25: SEMINAR, "REFUGEE HEALTH SEMINAR FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS". Topics to be addressed include: dietary issues, psychological trauma, social and welfare issues and common medical problems. Presented on behalf of the W A Refugee Health Network & Association of Paediatric and Child Health Nurses. At Princess Margaret Hospital, Perth. Register interest via Renee DeLeuil 9340 8101/0409 901 322 or email renee.deleuil@health.wa.gov.au (refer: <http://www.chilout.org/events/index.html>)

SEPTEMBER 26 – OCTOBER 1: "MATER DEI RETREAT". Sr Monica Sparks sgs is offering a retreat at the beautiful bush and river property of Mater Dei, Polding Centre, Camden NSW. The retreat is entitled, "Sacred Presence- Behold I am doing a new thing" and is described as " An experiential and contemplative time celebrating the God-story within us and in all creation. For details contact Sr Monica on 02 46554671 or email sister.monica@bigpond.com.au (refer: <http://www.catholicearthcareoz.net/events.html#Future>)

SEPTEMBER 27 – 28: CONFERENCE, "MOBILE BOUNDARIES/RIGID WORLDS". Two day conference examining our mobile world, and how it intersects with new and continuing forms of inclusion/exclusion in media, new economies and global exchange, transnationality and identity, postcolony etc. Centre for Research on Social Inclusion, Macquarie University, Sydney (refer: http://coss.net.au/events/acoss/1093574144_24354_20040827.jsp?subsite=acoss)

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

AUGUST NEWS MONITOR

HEADMASTER OPTIMISTIC OVER BAKHTIYARI CLAIMS RE-EXAMINATION: The head of the Adelaide school attended by two boys of the celebrated Bakhtiyari asylum seeker family expressed optimism that fresh attempts to prove they really are from Afghanistan, not Pakistan, will vindicate the family and lead to a more humane attitude on the part of the Australian Government.

POVERTY EMERGING AS MAJOR ELECTION ISSUE: Candidates in the 9 October Federal Election will be invited by the Vote [1] No More Poverty campaign to attend local Public Forums across the nation, especially in marginal seats, to tell voters where they stand on poverty and inequality.

SUDANESE BISHOPS WARN VIOLENCE SET TO ESCALATE: Sudan's Catholic bishops have warned that efforts to bring peace to the south of the country could be frustrated by the situation in the western province of Darfur.

BISHOP GRECH SAYS VISA CHANGES MUST GO FURTHER: Australia's Catholic Bishops have said the government's decision to allow some refugees on Temporary Protection Visas to apply for permanent residency does not go far enough.

PELL SAYS LET KOSOVARs STAY IN AUSTRALIA: Cardinal George Pell gave his support to six Kosovar families of Albury-Wodonga whom local Catholics are backing in their fight against deportation to their homeland.

BISHOP SAYS 'NO QUESTION' DARFUR VIOLENCE IS ETHNIC CLEANSING: After a visit to Sudan, the chairman of the US bishops' international policy committee said there is "no question" that the killings in the Darfur region represent ethnic cleansing.

BROOME DIOCESE APPLAUDS WA GOVT COTTON DECISION: Coordinator of the Broome Diocesan Office of Justice, Ecology & Peace, Br Shane Wood, welcomed the decision by the State Government not to renew the Memorandum of Understanding with the proponent of cotton trials in the Kimberley.

CATHOLICS LOBBY SAYS LETTER QUESTIONS ETHICS OF PUBLIC DEBATE: Australian Political Ministry Network (PolMin) said that a former senior public servant's letter to The Australian newspaper has raised further serious questions about the ethical quality of public debate and information.

VINNIES PLEA FOR LANDLORDS TO HELP SPONSORED REFUGEES: The St Vincent de Paul migrant and refugee coordinator in South Australia raised concerns about a housing rental crisis being faced by sponsored refugees.

JESUIT CENTRE CONDEMNS DETENTION CENTRE CLIMATE OF VIOLENCE: An international report's citation of Australia as the only western nation in its list of 65 countries where religious violence is a significant concern, is disturbing, according to the Uniya Jesuit Social Justice Centre.

CATHOLICS LOBBY BLAMES BAD POLICY FOR 'ETERNAL DETENTION' DECISION: Friday's High Court decision to enforce indefinite detention on stateless "failed" asylum seekers further highlights the injustice of the Federal Government's current migration policy, according to John Sweeney of the Australian Political Ministry Network (PolMin).

NZ CARDINAL EXPRESSES SYMPATHY TO JEWISH COMMUNITY: Cardinal Thomas Williams of Wellington wrote to the city's Jewish community expressing his deep sadness at the recent desecration of graves in the Jewish section two local cemeteries.

BISHOPS IN CALL TO BOOST EFFORT SAFEGUARD GREAT BARRIER REEF: Queensland's seven Catholic Bishops launched a landmark Pastoral Letter calling for a renewed effort to safeguard the Great Barrier Reef, which they call a "wonder of creation".

NUN CHALLENGES MEDIA MISCHIEF ON TIMOR OIL: Josephite Sr Susan Connolly expressed her dismay at the "one-sided view" being taken by the Murdoch press in particular on the sea boundaries dispute between Australia and East Timor.

CATHOLICS LOBBY URGES SENATE TO PROTECT WATER: The PolMin Catholics lobby group issued a reminder that the Australia - US Free Trade Agreement being debated by the Senate, leaves open the possibility of foreign investment in Australia's waters.

VINNIES SAYS PRICE HIKES HIT BATTLERS THE HARDEST: St Vincent de Paul Society NSW/ACT spokesperson Terry McCarthy expressed alarm at the rate at which battling Australians have been hit the hardest by price hikes on essential goods and services.

BRISBANE BISHOP MEETS WEST PAPUA HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATE: Brisbane auxiliary Bishop Joseph Oudeman met with visiting prominent West Papuan human rights advocate John Rumbiak at the office of the Archdiocesan Catholic Justice and Peace Commission.

VATICAN AFFIRMS FEMININE VALUES: The Vatican strongly supported the role of women in the Church and society and called for policies which create a greater balance between work and family life.

- *courtesy Church Resources' CathNews, stories in detail at <http://www.cathnews.com/news/408>*

SEPTEMBER SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR

SEPT. 1 NATIONAL WATTLE DAY: The Wattle is considered to be of national significance, historically, symbolically and as a form of our own unique identity as Australians. Green and Gold are our National Colours (proclaimed 1984) and Golden Wattle is the National Floral Emblem of Australia (proclaimed 1988).

SEPT. 7 NATIONAL THREATENED SPECIES DAY: This day aims to encourage the community to prevent further extinction of Australia's fauna and flora, and to restore healthy numbers of endangered species and ecological communities in the wild. September is also Biodiversity Month, a time when many Australians celebrate our unique and valuable biodiversity with activities to protect and conserve the environment.

SEPT. 8 INTERNATIONAL LITERACY DAY

United Nations Literacy Decade 2003 – 2012

Theme: Literacy as Freedom

Today, literacy remains a major global challenge. 860 million adults are illiterate, over 100 million children have no access to school, and countless children, young people and adults who attend school or other education programmes fall short of the required level to be considered literate. Literacy is about more than reading and writing. It is about how we communicate in society, it is about social practices and relationships, it is about knowledge, language and culture. Literacy, the use of written communication, finds its place in our lives alongside other ways of communicating. Literacy takes many forms: on paper, on the computer screen, on TV, on posters and signs. Those who are literate take it for granted, but those who are not are excluded from much communication in today's world. Indeed, it is the excluded who can best appreciate the notion of 'literacy as freedom'.

SEPT. 21 INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE: The International Day of Peace has been designated by the United Nations General Assembly as "a day of global ceasefire and non-violence, an invitation to all nations and peoples to honour a cessation of hostilities for the duration of the day". It is meant to still the guns for some very practical reasons: so that humanitarian assistance can be delivered more easily; so that civilians can gain safe passage away from besieged areas; so that crops can be planted, or shelter erected, free from the threat of instant destruction; so that refugees and displaced persons can have at least some respite from the hostilities that have routed them from their homes.

But of course, the Day of Peace should also be a pause for reflection by the wider international community on the threats and challenges we face. In some parts of the world, the dominant threats to peace and security are seen as new and potentially more virulent forms of terrorism, the proliferation of non-conventional weapons, the spread of transnational criminal networks and the ways in which all these things may be coming together to reinforce one another. But for many others around the globe, poverty, disease, deprivation and civil war remain the highest priorities.

Our challenge is to ensure we have the rules, instruments and institutions to deal with all these threats -- not according to some hierarchy of "first order" and "second order" issues, but as a linked set of global, cross-border challenges that affect, and should concern, all people. The divisions of the past year have raised doubts about the adequacy and effectiveness of those rules and tools.

"On the International Day of Peace, let us use these 24 hours -- this brief period of what we hope will be relative quiet -- to begin a peaceful dialogue, one that should continue in the General Assembly, to promote a global consensus on the dominant threats to peace and security in our time -- and most of all, what to do about them." - UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, Message on the International Day of Peace 2003

There is a Peace Pole in the lobby of the United Nations headquarters in New York. All who pass are invited to place their prayer or message of peace inside the hollow Pole, which features the prayer: May Peace prevail on Earth, in the official UN Languages. For more information: www.worldpeace.org

SEPT. 26 SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY: On this day each year, the Church publishes a Social Justice Sunday Statement which addresses a social issue of contemporary importance. This year the theme is Cultivating a Culture of Peace. For more information: www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au

SEPT. 27 WORLD MARITIME DAY: The day is used to focus attention on the importance of shipping safety and the marine environment. For more information: www.imo.org

*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.*