



ACSJC BRIEFING

No. 56 – April 2005

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 SECRETARIAT

Dear Friends,

April 10 – 16 is the Global Week of Action for Trade Justice. Included in this briefing is a calendar of events during the Week of Action. Anyone is welcome to participate in any of these events.

TRADE JUSTICE

Trade can contribute to economic growth and development, just as globalisation of communications can contribute to cultural exchange and enrich lives. But over the last decade international trade agreements have been strengthened in ways that can also have negative impacts on the daily lives of people all over the world.

Firstly, trade agreements have been expanded in scope, and have moved from dealing mainly with trade in goods and reduction of tariffs (taxes on imports) to include areas such as trade in services and rules about intellectual property rights. This means that trade law now reaches into many areas of health, cultural and other social policy.

Secondly, trade agreements have developed much stronger dispute processes through which governments can challenge the law or policy of other governments, on the grounds that they are barriers to trade. The dispute findings are enforced by strong penalties in the form of trade sanctions.

This strengthening of trade law has made it far stronger than international human rights law, which has no enforcement process other than naming and shaming. This broadening and strengthening means that aspects of international trade agreements can undermine social justice goals and human rights as defined in United Nations Conventions which many governments, including the Australian government, have adopted.

THE GLOBAL WEEK OF ACTION

The idea for the Global Week of Action was generated at the International Trade Campaign Conference in Delhi, November 2003 with a call to action for trade justice. During that Conference, graphic pictures emerged of the injustice being experienced by the poor, especially in developing countries.

Sarath from Sri Lanka, spoke of how in his country, water sources were about to be privatised, so that even if a village had a well, its inhabitants would still have to pay for their water because the springs from which the well water came had been privatised. This in a country where 80% of the population live on less than \$1 a day.

The Global Week of Action invites all movements and campaigns active on international trade to take action within their own areas in order to produce a global impact. The aim is to challenge the free trade myth and to put forward alternatives by delivering the biggest global mobilisation ever seen.

The Message is:

NO to the rich and powerful imposing unjust trade agreements, indiscriminate liberalisation and privatisation on the poor.

YES to everyone's right to food, a livelihood, water, health and education.

To endorse the Global Week of Action, visit: www.april2005.org

EVENTS IN THE GLOBAL WEEK OF ACTION

Saturday April 9 Sisters of Charity Advocacy Network Meeting
NSW SCAN Meeting will mark the Global Week of Action with Prayer, Reflection, Information and Action on Trade Justice

Time 10 am to 12.15 pm

Venue St Vincent's College, Rockwall Crescent, Potts Point NSW

RSVP by April 6

Monday April 11 Parish Social Justice Meeting

Mona Vale Parish SJ Meeting will mark the Global Week of Action with Prayer, Reflection, Information and Action on Trade Justice

Time 7.30 to 9.30 pm

Venue Sacred Heart Parish, 1 Keenan St, Mona Vale

RSVP by April 8

Tuesday April 12 Book Launch

The launch of Australian Catholic Social Justice Council's publication: Trade Justice by Sr Suzette Clark & Dr Patricia Ranald

Time 12 noon to 1pm
Venue Pitt Street Uniting Church, 264 Pitt Street, Sydney
Speakers: Bishop Patrick Power
Auxiliary Bishop of Canberra and Goulburn Archdiocese and
Deputy Chair of the ACSJC
Sharan Burrow
National President of Australian Council of Trade Unions and
President of International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
Representative from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
(TBC)

Tuesday April 12 Public Rally: Don't trade away Sydney Water

Over 1.1 billion people in developing countries lack access to safe drinking water and many areas of Australia remain drought-stricken.

Global water corporations see access to water as a source of profits and are lobbying governments to include water services in the WTO's trade in services agreement (GATS).

Time 1.00 to 2.00 pm
Venue Sydney Water Head Office, 115-123 Bathurst St, Sydney CBD

Monday April 11 to Friday April 15 Oxfam Fair Trade Coffee

Oxfam Community Aid Abroad will give away cups of coffee

The aim of the week is to encourage people to use fair trade coffee in the workplace

Time 12 noon
Venue Hyde Park, near the Archibald Fountain

POSTCARD CAMPAIGN

A postcard has been produced for the Global Week of Action on the right to water and the WTO's trade in services agreement (GATS).

The postcard highlights the threat in developing countries and in Australia of losing water in the GATS.

The postcard is addressed to Trade Minister Mark Vaile and calls on the Trade Minister not to include water services or any other essential services in Australia's offers in the GATS negotiations and not to make requests about essential services to developing countries. The postcard will be distributed nationally in coffee shops, theatres and other venues from 1 April. An electronic version is being developed, and will be distributed.

Saturday April 16 Sisters of Charity Advocacy Network Meeting

Vic. SCAN Meeting will mark the Global Week of Action with Prayer, Reflection, Information and Action on Trade Justice

Time 10 am to 12.15 pm
Venue 15 Rosebank Ave, Strathmore, Victoria
RSVP by April 13

RSVP / For more information: Suzette Clark rsc
Phone/Fax 02 9954 1788
Email suzettec@acsjc.org.au

Prayer

Let us pray:

*We believe in God the Creator,
loving parent of all who live.
We believe in Jesus Christ,
dying so that all may live.
We believe in the Holy Spirit,
sanctifier of all life.*

*God, inspired by your love for us and your Word to us
and empowered by your Holy Spirit
we resolve, through our words and action
to respect and uphold the dignity
of every person with whom we share this planet.*

*May your kingdom come
and may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Amen*

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: TRADE JUSTICE: Catholic Social Justice Series No.54 – by Sr Suzette Clarke rsc and Dr Patricia Ranald has been published as a contribution to the Global Week of Action for Trade Justice, from April 10-16, 2005. The Global Week of Action invites all movements and campaigns which are active on international trade issues to take action within their own areas to produce a global impact. Their message is No to the rich and powerful imposing unjust trade agreements, indiscriminate trade liberalisation and privatisation on the poor Yes to everyone's right to food, a livelihood, water, health and education. (Cost \$6.60 plus postage) (postage rates listed below)

OCCASIONAL PAPER: ENDING HUNGER – HOW FAR CAN WE GO?: Catholic Social Justice Series No.53 – by Fr Bruce Duncan CSsR Fr Bruce Duncan shows us the face of inhuman poverty in a world of contrasts between opulence and starvation and sets this situation against the central goal of the Millennium Development Goals, endorsed at the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000, to reduce the extent of hunger and the most acute poverty by half by 2015. This paper shows how extreme poverty is preventable, while it documents the challenges facing the wealthy nations if they are truly prepared to work towards their stated goal. (Cost \$6.60 plus postage) (postage rates listed below)

2005 SOCIAL JUSTICE DIARY/CALENDAR – SEASONS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE: The 2005 Diary/Calendar explores the Gospel challenge to live justly in today's society. A particular social justice theme is developed each month, providing a social justice program for the full year. Information and ideas for prayer and reflection are included. Cost: \$6.60 (inc. GST), plus postage.
http://www.acsjc.org.au/CONTENT/publications/social_justice_calendar.html

DISCUSSION GUIDE – WORLD DAY OF PEACE MESSAGE 2005:
The title of the Holy Father's 2005 Message is 'Do not be Overcome by Evil but Overcome Evil with Good'. This Discussion Guide provides a brief summary of the message, some questions for consideration or discussion, and additional resources. Website paper available at: www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au

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

CURRENT ISSUES/RESOURCES

HUMAN RIGHTS REGISTER 2004: The Melbourne Catholic Commission for Justice, Development and Peace recently launched the 2004 edition of the annual Australian Human Rights Register. The Register records individual reports and accounts of developments and violations and analyses them in the light of the human rights conventions that Australia has ratified. It focuses on individual instances within Australia and contains reports from community legal centres, non-government organisations and the national media. The Register can be downloaded from the Melbourne Archdiocesan CCJDP website:
<http://www.melbourne.catholic.org.au/ccjdp/>

UNIYA LENTEN SERIES: "HONESTY MATTERS – THE ETHICS OF DAILY LIFE": Honesty does matter - this was the conclusion of the fourteen different speakers who spoke in the 2005 Jesuit Lenten Seminars. Speakers and responders explored this topic from politics, to the media, the corporate sector, sport, public and private life, and theology. Many of the papers presented during the lecture series are now on Uniya's website. The remainder will soon be posted. Uniya will also publish these papers in a book. (refer: <http://www.uniya.org/talks/lenten2005.html>)

INFORMATION KIT: "INDIGENOUS HEALTH IN AUSTRALIA": The Fred Hollows Foundation is raising awareness about the health emergency faced by Indigenous communities throughout Australia. The thoroughly researched and accessible briefing papers provide accurate, relevant information on the current status of Indigenous health and its underlying causes. (refer: <http://www.hollows.org/content/TextOnly.aspx?s=146>)

NATSIEC PRAYER DIARY: The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Council has produced a resource to support ecumenical prayer and partnerships between Indigenous Australians and between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. The Prayer Diary includes possible readings, prayer concerns for each day and reflections, marking where appropriate key dates in the Indigenous calendar. (refer: http://www.ncca.org.au/natsiec/theology/prayer_diary)

COMPENDIUM OF THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH: The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, prepared by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace presented at the Vatican in late October 2004 is now available for purchase. It can be ordered for \$51.95 through Pauline Books & Media outlets in Adelaide (08 8223 2735), Melbourne (03 9882 3424) Sydney (02 9264 8630) or visit online at: <http://www.paulinebooks.com.au/>

MICAH CHALLENGE VIDEO: A Micah Challenge video made in the UK is available for download to CD on-line at http://micahchallenge.org/Education_Resources/219.asp It is a 3 minute introduction to Micah Challenge and the Millennium Development Goals. Another new video featuring Bono, Scarlett Johansson and Nelson Mandela, is also available. A good discussion starter - only 3 minutes long, it sets out the MDGs and action in 2005. Both videos are available on one DVD from the MC office for \$5. Contact info@micahchallenge.org.au or call (02) 9453 1586.

POSITION VACANT – YCW MANAGER: The Young Christian Workers (YCW) is a Catholic, non-profit organisation based in Granville dedicated to promoting the dignity and rights of young workers. YCW is seeking a motivated person to manage the continued development of the YCW, working closely with the Coordinator of the YCW. The successful applicant should have: experience in grant writing; fundraising for community organisations experience; experience working in youth and/or community services; and a current NSW driver's licence. To request an information pack for this position please contact Paul Falzon tel: (02) 9682 6719 or paul.falzon@ycw.org.au Applications close Friday 8th April 2005.

APRIL NOTICES

MARCH 29 – APRIL 2: THEATRE, "THROUGH THE WIRE". Ros Horin's award winning play tells the story of four refugees and the Australians who helped them. The Playhouse, Canberra Theatre Centre, Civic Square, London Circuit, Civic, ACT. Bookings essential. \$45 per person, concession \$35. Call 6240 9446 (w), 0417 048 217 (m), 02 6255 3820 (h & fax), and email paul.oboohov@dest.gov.au. (refer: <http://www.chilout.org/events/index.html>)

APRIL 5: PUBLIC ADDRESS, "FAIR TRADE - THE HEAT ON THE CHOCOLATE INDUSTRY". Australian Catholic University Students for Awareness will be holding their second talk on Fair Trade in the chocolate industry. This event will highlight the unfair trade in the cocoa industry and provide a tangible action plan for trading fairly. The speech is open to the public and free. 6.00pm, Student Cafeteria, Melbourne Campus, 115 Victoria Parade, Fitzroy, Melbourne. For further info contact: acu-aware@yahoo.com (refer: http://www.acu.edu.au/acu_national/News___Events_Calendar/Events.cfm)

APRIL 5: PUBLIC LECTURE, "UNHCR'S ROLE WITH RESPECT TO INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS". Mr Neil Wright is the Regional Representative of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. He will address the topic about Internally Displaced Persons with particular reference to his recent work in Sri Lanka in the aftermath of the tsunami. 6.00pm, Staff Law Library, Level 2, Faculty of Law, Building 5, cnr Fellows & East Rds, ANU, Canberra (refer: <http://law.anu.edu.au/cipl/events.asp>)

APRIL 6: PRESS CLUB ADDRESS, "THE NATURAL ADVANTAGE OF NATIONS - Australia's opportunity for sustainability". L. Hunter Lovins, President of Natural Capitalism Inc. and Co-Author 'Natural Capitalism', discusses the opportunities for Australia to achieve a more sustainable economy by embracing the principles of Natural Capitalism, a concept that enables organisations to increase profitability, efficiency and productivity while becoming more environmentally and socially responsible. 12.00pm to 2.00pm, National Press Club, Canberra (refer: www.npc.org.au/speakers.htm)

APRIL 8: EVENT, "UNITY AGAINST RACISM". A Series of events featuring Ngarrindjeri Reggae band Kineman Karma & other bands, dance groups & speakers. Tickets \$15 or \$10 (concess). 8:00pm, Fowlers Live, 68 North Terrace, Adelaide (refer: <http://www.active.org.au/adelaide/calendar/?day=8&month=4>)

APRIL 8 – 9: THEATRE, "THROUGH THE WIRE". Ros Horrin's play performed at The Q Theatre in Penrith, Western Sydney. Tickets (including afternoon tea) \$45, with proceeds going to refugees and frontline support. (refer: <http://www.ruralaustraliansforrefugees.org/template.php3?area=news&content=noticeboard>)

APRIL 10 – 16: GLOBAL WEEK OF ACTION FOR TRADE JUSTICE. A calendar of events for the Week of Action is outlined above. For further info refer: <http://www.april2005.org>;
http://www.acsjc.org.au/content/issues/global_week_of_action_for_trade_justice___april_10-16.html;

APRIL 11: SEMINAR, "IT'S ABOUT PLURALISM AND CULTURAL TOLERANCE". Ms Ashleigh Rees examines the Australian reaction to the adoption of the Loi Stasi to ban religious symbols in French state schools. The seminar will contrast the French position on visible religious symbols, manifest in the majority approval for the ban, with the Australian position (as gauged through opinions expressed in the mainstream press). 1:10 – 3:00 pm, Room 509, Level 5, Arts Centre Building (Cnr Grattan & Swanston Sts), The University of Melbourne. (refer: http://events.unimelb.edu.au/eventid_1526.html)

APRIL 13: SEMINAR, "THE INDIGENOUS SECTOR, SELF-DETERMINATION AND SOCIAL IMPROVEMENT". Robert Levitus, Research Fellow, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research at the ANU considers the position of Indigenous organisations in the policy areas of self-determination and practical reconciliation. 12.30 – 2.00pm, CAEPR Seminar Room GO58, Ground Floor, Hanna Neumann Bldg 21, ANU, Canberra. For further info call (02) 6125 0587 or visit: <http://www.anu.edu.au/caepr/events.php>

APRIL 14: PUBLIC MEETING, "STOP POLICE RACISM; STOP BLACK DEATHS IN CUSTODY". All are invited to attend a public meeting at Inala Community Hall, Wirraway Pde. Inala, Brisbane. The speakers include Rev. Alex Gaitor and Sam Watson. Nicole Cleavans is the facilitator. For more details contact Rev. Alex Gaitor on 32771873.

APRIL 16 – 17: WORKSHOP, "AUSTRALIAN LONERGAN WORKSHOP". The ACU National's Centre for Research into Ethics and Decision-making in Organisations (CREDO) hosts the Australian Lonergan Workshop. The Workshop, held every two years, provides an opportunity for those interested in the ideas of Canadian philosopher, theologian, Bernard Lonergan SJ to gather, exchange information and learn from each other. 9.30am - 5pm Saturday and 10am - 4pm Sunday, Christ Lecture Theatre, ACU Melbourne Campus (St Patrick's), 115 Victoria Parade, East Melbourne. For further info call 03-9953 3270. (refer: http://www.acu.edu.au/acu_national/News___Events_Calendar/Events.cfm)

APRIL 19 – 22: COURSE, "FOR THE LIFE OF THE WORLD – Introduction to Catholic Social Teaching". This Course unit presented through the Centre for Christian Spirituality at the Broken Bay Institute by Ms Sandie Cornish will examine the historical development of the modern social teachings, their sources, methodology and key themes. This course will be of interest to: students at the undergraduate and graduate level; social justice educators and coordinators; members of social justice action groups; teachers and RE coordinators; pastors and deacons; pastoral associates; and youth ministers. The course can be studied for credit towards an academic award from the Sydney College of Divinity. Fee options: Credit (Award) Course \$500/\$650; Attendance only \$250; Seniors \$200. Lectures 9.30am – 4.00pm daily at the Broken Bay Institute, Unit 11, 1 Central Avenue, Thornleigh. For further info call: (02) 9473 4570 (refer: <http://www.bbi.catholic.edu.au/index2.htm>)

APRIL 20: SEMINAR, "COMPARING EDUCATION AND LABOUR FORCE OUTCOMES of urban Indigenous populations in Australia and New Zealand". Boyd Hunter, Fellow of the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research compares outcomes of urban Maori population with the Indigenous peoples living in Australian cities, paying particular attention to labour force status and education outcomes. 12.30 – 2.00pm, CAEPR Seminar Room GO58, Ground Floor, Hanna Neumann Bldg 21, ANU, Canberra. For further info call (02) 6125 0587 or visit: <http://www.anu.edu.au/caepr/events.php>

APRIL 22 - 23: PUBLIC LECTURES, "PROTECTION OR PERSECUTION?

Countering the Terrorists". A two-part public forum on anti-terror legislation and its impact on civil liberties. On April 22, speakers including Julian Burnside QC and Nicole Bieske address the theme 'Fighting Terrorism and the Erosion of Civil Liberties' (6.30pm – 8.30pm Casey Plaza Lecture Theatre, Bowen Street, RMIT). On April 23, speakers including Stephen Hopper, Waleed Aly, Les Thomas & Jess Whyte address the theme 'Back to the Future: Terrorism and Social Control' (10.00am – 12.30pm, Building 12 Level 5 Room 2, Bowen Street, RMIT, Melbourne). Registration fee for 2 days: \$15 fully waged / \$8 concession. Sponsored by the RMIT School of Social Science and Planning and the RMIT Community Advocacy Unit. For further info call 03 9925 2910 or visit <http://advocacy.tce.rmit.edu.au>

APRIL 26: PUBLIC LECTURE, "TO LIVE AND DIE FOR JESUS: Social and Political Consequences of Devotion to Jesus". Address by Prof. Larry Hurtado, Professor of New Testament Language, Literature, and Theology at the University of Edinburgh, and author of the recent acclaimed study *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (2003). 6.00pm Mercy Lecture Theatre, ACU Melbourne Campus, 115 Victoria Pde, Fitzroy, Melbourne. (refer: http://www.acu.edu.au/acu_national/News___Events_Calendar/Events.cfm)

APRIL 26: SEMINAR, "THE QUALITY OF PART-TIME JOBS IN AUSTRALIA". Presentation by Dr Jenny Chalmers (Centre for Applied Social Research, RMIT) at the Social Policy Research Centre Seminar Program, 1.00 – 2.00pm, Room 3.096, University of New South Wales, Kensington, Sydney. (refer: <http://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au/confer.htm>)

APRIL 27: SEMINAR, "VISIONS FROM THE CROSSROADS: Indigenous Australians Speak Out". Larissa Berhendt, Director of the Indigenous House of Learning, University of Technology, Sydney reviews a range of Indigenous perspectives of where to go from here in Indigenous Affairs policy drawn from a recent collection of papers edited by Larissa Berhendt and Mick Dodson. 12.30 – 2.00pm, CAEPR Seminar Room GO58, Ground Floor, Hanna Neumann Bldg 21, Australian National University, Canberra. For further info call (02) 6125 0587 or visit: <http://www.anu.edu.au/caepr/events.php>

APRIL 27 – 29: NATIONAL CONFERENCE, "WITH FAITH AND HOPE AND LOVE". The Commission for Australian Catholic Women and the Diocese of Cairns invite registration of delegates for the inaugural National Catholic Women Leaders Conference. This important national event is being held in Cairns. The Conference is being coordinated by Carmel Ross, Director of Catholic Education in the Diocese of Cairns, who is the diocesan contact for the Commission for Australian Catholic Women. Enquiries about the conference should be made to carmelr@ceo.cairns.catholic.edu.au. (Refer: <http://www.cacw.catholic.org.au/>)

APRIL 29 – MAY 2: GATHERING, "NATIONAL NON-VIOLENCE GATHERING". Themes discussed at this event will deal with non-violence in Australia – from personal journey to social change. One day of structured presentations and two days of open-space. The gathering will be held at Currimundi Outdoor Recreation Centre, near Wurtulla, Sunshine Coast, Queensland. (refer: <http://www.cacw.catholic.org.au/news/cww.asp?id=421>)

MAY 15: FORUM, "A CHURCH THAT WON'T BE SILENCED!" A forum of church groups and individuals working in the areas of human rights and social justice, organised around the feast of Pentecost 2005, aims to enable church groups and individuals to network, share skills, and cooperate on initiatives and campaigns. This year's Forum will feature Keynote Speaker Chico Whitaker, internationally renowned Brazilian social activist, and will be part of a program involving Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Auckland and Bangkok. Respondents include Rev Dr Dorothy McRae McMahon, Fr Michael Whelan and other local speakers. The Forum is to be hosted by the Australian Catholic Movement for Intellectual & Cultural Affairs (ACMICA) and will be held at Australian Catholic University, Strathfield Campus (Barker Rd), in Sydney. For further information and to register your interest visit <http://www.newpentecost.info/> or <http://www.acmica.org/>

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

MARCH NEWS MONITOR

MELBOURNE ARCHBISHOP URGES RETHINK OF VIC HATRED LAW:

Archbishop Denis Hart said Victoria's Racial and Religious Tolerance Act, which was brought into focus by recent court action between the Islamic Council of Victoria and the Catch The Fire evangelical Christian group, tends to blur race and religion.

COMMISSION WELCOMES GOVT CHANGE OF HEART ON REFUGEES:

Brisbane's Catholic Justice and Peace Commission is "rejoicing" over an Immigration Department decision to grant permanent protection to two young Afghan men.

FAMILIES RISK FINANCIAL SECURITY OVER CREDIT CARDS: The overuse of credit cards at Christmas is driving low to middle income families to financial ruin, according to Sydney Centacare financial counsellor David Bell, who adds that the problem appears to be getting worse.

BRAZILIAN PAPAL CANDIDATE OUTLINES SOCIAL JUSTICE VISION:

Cardinal Claudio Hummes of São Paulo, Brazil - one of the Latin American cardinals considered a possible successor to Pope John Paul II - revealed his determination to apply the Gospel to questions of economic justice and the "option for the poor".

PELL SEEKS CLEMENCY FOR DEATH ROW AUSTRALIAN: Sydney's Cardinal George Pell joined the fight to save convicted Australian heroin trafficker Nguyen Tuong Van, who has been condemned to death in a Singapore court.

POPE MARKS ANNIVERSARY OF GAUDIUM ET SPES: Pope John Paul II issued a message to commemorate the 40th anniversary year of the core Vatican II document Gaudium et Spes - the Church in the Modern World - which was promulgated by Pope Paul VI on 7 December 1965.

ADELAIDE ARCHBISHOP BACKS EQUAL RIGHTS FOR GAY COUPLES: The Adelaide Archdiocese gave support for a South Australian Parliamentary Bill giving gay and lesbian couples access to the rights enjoyed by heterosexual couples.

VINNIES SUPPORTS 3000 LEFT HOMELESS IN REDEVELOPMENT: The St Vincent de Paul Society gave its backing to community action opposing NSW Government plans to bulldoze the homes of 3000 people on a local public housing estate in Sydney's south-west.

CATHOLIC EMPLOYMENT BODY URGES WAGE INCREASE: The Australian Catholic Commission for Employment Relations told Federal Workplace Relations Minister Kevin Andrews that the minimum wage in Australia should be raised by \$26.60 per week.

US CATHOLIC WOMEN "STILL FACE 'STAINED-GLASS CEILING'": Despite the church's "long, wonderful tradition of women in leadership," women still face a "stained-glass ceiling" in church employment, a Chicago archdiocesan official told a national gathering of leaders in Catholic philanthropy.

CATHOLIC WELFARE JOINS TAX CUTS CALL: Catholic Welfare Australia called on the Government to address high effective marginal tax rates for the poor.

VATICAN BIOETHICIST SAYS PATIENT'S TUBE 'DIRECT EUTHANASIA': Removing the feeding tube from Terri Schiavo, a brain-damaged Florida woman, or other patients in a similar condition amounts to "direct euthanasia", a "cruel way of killing someone," said the Vatican's top bioethicist.

CATHOLIC SUBMISSION FOR WORK-FAMILY BALANCE INQUIRY: The Catholic sector is preparing a submission to the Standing Committee on Family and Human Services Inquiry into balancing Work and family.

HONG KONG BISHOP SAYS NEW LEADER'S FAITH NO GUARANTEE OF GOOD LEADERSHIP: China named Hong Kong Chief Secretary Donald Tsang - a devout Catholic - as the city's acting leader, but Catholic leader Bishop Joseph Zen said Tsang should be held responsible for the unjust policies of his predecessor.

VINNIES WORRIED ABOUT HEALTH INSURANCE THREAT TO POOR: The rising cost of private health insurance is widening the gap between the rich and the poor and threatens to make Australia an "unhealthy" nation, according to the St Vincent de Paul Society.

DIOCESE LOBBIES LOCAL MEMBER ON BEHALF OF DETAINEE: The Diocese of Toowoomba wrote to the local MP to urge the Federal Government to release of Australia's longest held detainee, Indian asylum seeker Peter Qasim.

BORDERLINE DISABLED STUCK IN UNEMPLOYMENT BLACKHOLE: An Adelaide Catholic employment agency said historic low in unemployment exposed a growing group of people with borderline disabilities who flounder in the mainstream job network.

VULNERABLE AT RISK FROM NSW "END-OF-LIFE GUIDELINES": Sydney auxiliary Bishop Anthony Fisher is worried that the new NSW Health Department Guidelines for Decision Making at the End of Life "lack the sort of clear safeguards necessary to protect vulnerable patients".

COMMISSION URGES BETTER QLD GOVT COLLABORATION WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES: Brisbane's Catholic Justice and Peace Commission called on the Queensland Government to work more collaboratively with Indigenous communities.

VATICAN SEMINAR ADDRESSES DIGNITY OF PRISONERS: Cardinal Renato Martino, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, stressed that being imprisoned never separates one from God's love and, therefore, from the human dignity that derives from and is rooted in this love.

POPE INSPIRES ECUMENICAL INDIGENOUS COMMISSION: The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission (NATSIEC) referred to Pope John Paul II's landmark 1986 speech to indigenous Australians as a source of inspiration at a time when setbacks in reconciliation demand "re-birth".

ZIMBABWE ARCHBISHOP SAYS PRIESTS BRIBED TO KEEP SILENT ON HUMAN RIGHTS: Many clergy in Zimbabwe have been bribed into silence about human rights violations in Zimbabwe by the government of President Robert Mugabe, according to the Archbishop of Bulawayo Pius Ncube.

RIGHTS REGISTER LAUNCH FOCUSES ON CHILD DETENTION: At the launch of the Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Commission for Justice, Development and Peace Human Rights Register, a leading refugee rights advocate cautioned activists and the Federal Government against using children for political objectives.

JESUIT POSTCODE EXPLANATION FOR SYDNEY SUBURBAN VIOLENCE: Jesuit Social Services Policy Director Fr Peter Norden yesterday used the conclusions of his organisation's "postcodes" Disadvantage Survey, to shed light on the root causes of four successive nights of youth clashes with police on the streets of Macquarie Fields in Sydney's south-west.

- courtesy Church Resources' CathNews, stories in detail at <http://www.cathnews.com/news/503>

APRIL SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR

TRADE JUSTICE

Trade between individuals, communities and nations has always occurred in some form and is essential for development. Trade should be the means by which developing countries can lift themselves out of poverty.

Globalisation has many positive effects and possibilities, enabling the interconnectedness of nations, the networking of communities and movements, and almost instant global communication.

Services are the lifeblood of all societies, and are ultimately linked to every aspect of our lives: hospitals, schools, postal systems, provision of drinking water, sewage treatment, electricity and other energy supplies, and so on. The privatisation of essential public services in some countries is leading to foreign control of services, loss of national sovereignty and the exclusion of the majority of the population from health, education and other essential services.

The service sector is the largest and fastest growing part of the global economy, accumulating more than \$US 15 trillion a year. In developed countries, services represent more than 60% of the national economy, as compared with agriculture. In developing countries, it is the opposite; a much larger percentage of the national economy is in agriculture rather than in services. Trade in public essential services can mean that accessing these services becomes too expensive for many people.

General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) is an international trade agreement within the World Trade Organisation (WTO) that governs trade in all services. It treats services as commercial goods, ignoring the social aspects of many services, which are essential to people's lives.

Bilateral trade agreements rather than multilateral trade agreements are becoming more popular. This shift is detrimental to global cooperation, and has social implications for the poor and marginalised. In developing countries, bilateral agreements enforce liberalisation of trade and endanger food security, resulting in an even lower standard of living for many of the people; in Australia, as more industries go off shore and as tariffs drop, factories close and this reduces employment possibilities, especially for unskilled labour.

COMMENT

The reality is that we live in a world where millions live in poverty, demonstrating that the structures and systems of international trade are not working for the poor. In today's world many individuals and companies have at their disposal more wealth than some entire nations.

Our challenge is to ensure that the human person remains the centre and the beneficiary of all aspects of both trade and globalisation.

TRADE JUSTICE CAMPAIGN

Fair and just trade, not free trade, will enable all peoples to experience the positive aspects of globalisation. The Trade Justice Campaign is an international movement which aims to:

- stop developing countries being forced to open their markets, and champions their right to manage their own markets
- regulate big business and its investments to ensure people and the environment come before profits
- stop rich countries promoting the interests of big business through trade interventions that harm the poor and the environment
- ensure trade policy is made in a fair, transparent and democratic way.

*For more information: Australian Fair Trade & Investment Network
www.aftinet.org.au*

REFLECTION

Faced with the tragic situation of persistent poverty which afflicts so many people in our world, how can we fail to see that the quest for profit at any cost and the lack of effective, responsible concern for the common good have concentrated immense resources in the hands of a few while the rest of humanity suffers in poverty and neglect? ... Our goal should not be the benefit of a privileged few, but rather the improvement of the living conditions of all.

John Paul II, Lenten Message 2003, par.2

International trade between my country and the West is like an antelope and a giraffe competing for food which is at the top of a tree. You can make the ground beneath their feet level but the contest will still not be fair.

Dr Robert Aboagye-Mensah, General Secretary of the Christian Council of Ghana

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.