



ACSJC BRIEFING

No. 62 – October 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

IN THIS ISSUE

- From the Secretariat
- Latest publications
- Current issues
- October Notices
- September News Monitor
- October Social Justice Calendar

FROM THE SECRETARIAT

The 2005 Social Justice Sunday Statement – Jesus, Light for the World – was launched on Wednesday 14th September in preparation for Social Justice Sunday.

The ACSJC and its Secretariat are very grateful to all who were involved in its production, launch and promotion.

CATHOLIC BISHOPS' STATEMENT AND ASSOCIATED RESOURCES

Social Justice Sunday was celebrated on 26th September. Following this day, there are many ways the message of the Bishops' 2006 statement can be used throughout the year and beyond.

The Secretariat has copies of the Statement for anyone wishing to use it as a resource for social justice. Order the statement or download a copy from the websites of the ACBC and the ACSJC. (<http://www.acbc.catholic.org.au/latest.html> and <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au>).

There are other resources that are ideal for prayer and worship, personal reflection, discussion in classrooms and among groups. Prayers, teachers' resources, liturgy notes, the Ten-Steps leaflet and prayer card, a great powerpoint presentation and addresses delivered at the launch of the Statement can all be accessed via the ACSJC website.

Your further promotion of the Bishops' Statement and associated resources would be appreciated.

ANTI-POVERTY WEEK

During October, there are a range of events concerning the wellbeing of vulnerable individuals and families in Australia and around the world.

In recent years, a broad network of individuals and agencies has been seeking to raise awareness about the extent of poverty. Anti-Poverty Week (16 – 22 October) aims to strengthen public understanding of the causes and consequences of poverty and hardship. It also aims to encourage research, discussion and action to address these problems, including action by individuals, communities, organisations and governments.

The week coincides with the UN's annual International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on October 17.

Everyone who is interested in helping to reduce poverty and hardship in Australia and overseas is encouraged to organise their own activities during the week or join in some being organised by other people. The activities can be large or small, and events at the local level are especially welcome. The official Anti-Poverty Week website is www.antipovertyweek.org.au

The website includes details of events being planned as well as basic fact sheets, promotional material and links to sources of information and ideas about ways of reducing poverty and hardship.

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND AUSTRALIA

There has been much talk about the commitment of developed nations to achieving the Millennium Development Goals to address world poverty substantially by 2015. In 2000, world leaders attended a Millennium Summit and committed to a range of goals that would halve extreme poverty by 2015 (<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>).

In the recently released 2005 Human Development Report (<http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2005/>) the UN Development Programme laid the cards on the table for the developed world. Either we recommit and make this the start of a "Decade for Development" that will deliver on the promise of the 2000 Millennium Summit or we continue on a "business as usual" basis and make this the year the commitment is broken.

While attending the "UN Millennium Plus Five" summit in New York during September, Prime Minister Howard announced an increase in Australia's overseas aid commitment to \$4 billion over the next five years. Representatives of the Make Poverty History campaign welcomed the Prime Minister's commitment to lift aid funding. However, they said the increase to 0.36% of Gross National Income by 2010 was still short of the 0.5% being called for to meet the goals. (<http://www.makepovertyhistory.org.au/mediacentre.html>)

Responding to the third-world conditions often endured by Indigenous people in Australia, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Council is launching a Make Indigenous Poverty History campaign. Mr Graeme Mundine, Executive Secretary of NATSIEC, says the MDGs do not specifically target Indigenous Peoples but Indigenous Peoples are often the ones most affected by extreme poverty and usually rank at the bottom of most social and economic indicators.

"All key social and economic indicators show that Australian Indigenous Peoples are living in poverty: our children are twice as likely to die in infancy, and we suffer from more preventable diseases, higher unemployment, lower house ownership, lower engagement with education and we are six times as likely to be murdered.

"Poverty is a very real and debilitating experience for many of our people.

"The MDGs must be aligned with poverty reduction strategies that address the particular needs of Indigenous peoples. Without the meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples our marginalisation and exclusion will continue." Mr Mundine says.

For more information of the NATSIEC Make Indigenous Poverty History campaign, visit: http://www.ncca.org.au/natsiec/indigenous_poverty

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS REFORMS

With the Federal Government expected to complete its drafting of new Industrial Relations legislation soon, the Australian Catholic Commission for Employment Relations has released a substantial Catholic position paper on the proposed reforms.

"ACCER Briefing Paper No.1 On the Commonwealth Government's Proposals to Reform Workplace Relations in Australia" raises vital questions about key reform proposals that would reduce basic conditions in awards and the safety net, remove unfair dismissal protections and reduce the role of the Australian Industrial Relations Commission in setting fair minimum wages and protecting vulnerable workers.

The significance of these reforms cannot be overestimated. "Australia is now engaged in a discussion about employment law and industrial relations that is important to each and every one of us, to our families and to the future of our country," ACCER says.

And the paper draws attention to the Church's credentials to participate in the debate.

"The Catholic Church has developed teachings on work and the employment relationship over the past century," the paper says.

"The Church's social teachings are essential aspects of the Catholic faith. Catholic teaching on the spiritual, economic and social aspects of work in modern industrial societies has its genesis in Pope Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum*. Pope John Paul II reflected on the same issues in a contemporary setting in his encyclicals *Laborem Exercens* and *Centesimus Annus*."

The ACCER has examined the Government's proposed changes within the context of this body of Catholic Social Teaching and the Church's collective and diverse experience as an employer.

While a final assessment of the proposals must await the Government's tabling of the legislation in the Parliament and further consultations, ACCER raises some key concerns about wage fixing, unfair dismissals, minimum conditions, awards and agreement making, and the functions of the Australian Industrial Relations Commission.

This important document can be accessed and downloaded at <http://www.accer.asn.au/news/index.html>

- 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>)

ORDER NOW! - 2006 SOCIAL JUSTICE DIARY

The 2006 Diary includes the dates of significant events, anniversaries and special days which celebrate particular aspects of social justice. A 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.

This is an essential resource for teachers and parishes. Cost: \$6.60 (inc. GST), plus postage. To download an order form, go to:
http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/content/publications/social_justice_calendar.html The Diary will be out in November

2005 SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY STATEMENT – STILL TAKING ORDERS

This year's Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Social Justice Sunday Statement is entitled "Jesus, Light for the World – Living the Gospel today". The ACSJC is now taking orders for the Statement. An order form is available on the ACSJC website: <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au>

The Statement can be downloaded at:
<http://www.acbc.catholic.org.au/latest.html> and
http://www.acsjc.org.au/CONTENT/publications/documentation/documentation_sjs01.html

LEAFLET & PRAYER CARD: TEN STEPS TOWARDS LIVING THE GOSPEL TODAY

Now available. Call (02) 9956 5811

Other resources available on the ACSJC website:
www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au

ACSJC STATEMENT FOR JUBILEE SUNDAY:

ACSJC Statement for Jubilee Sunday (26 June):
http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/Content/issues/statement_for_jubilee_sunday,_26_june_2005.html

PASTORAL LETTER: THE MINIMUM WAGE IN AN AGE OF PROSPERITY AND WEALTH

The Pastoral Letter issued on the Feast of St Joseph the Worker. Available at:
www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au

SERIES PAPER: TRADE JUSTICE

Catholic Social Justice Series No. 54 – Sr Suzette Clark rsc and Dr Patricia Ranald. (Cost \$6.60 plus postage) (postage rates listed below)

SERIES PAPER: ENDING HUNGER – HOW FAR CAN WE GO?

Catholic Social Justice Series No.53 – Fr Bruce Duncan CSsR. (Cost \$6.60 plus postage) (postage rates listed below)

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

CURRENT ISSUES/RESOURCES

MEDIA RELEASE – "GOVERNMENT MUST ENSURE JUSTICE FOR HICKS"

21 September 2005

The ACSJC called on the Australian Government to secure real justice for Australian citizen David Hicks following the Pentagon announcement of a resumption of military commission hearings. Bishop Christopher Saunders, ACSJC Chairman said, "Australians believe that all citizens are entitled to their day in court and the protection of the rule of law should they be accused of an offence. We believe this right must be guaranteed, regardless of the nature of the charges against an individual. David Hicks should have access to the ordinary processes of justice if he has done anything wrong. The detention of David has gone on for too long. I call on the Australian Government to use its best endeavours to end the detention of David Hicks. It should do this by either seeking a proper trial before a non-military court or returning him to Australia." (http://www.acsjc.org.au/Content/media_releases/2005_09_21_1127281579.html)

MEDIA RELEASE – "LAUNCH OF THE 2005 SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY STATEMENT" 13 September 2005

Among many issues, the Social Justice Sunday Statement highlights the amount of wealth we waste in a world where poverty affects billions. Each year Australians spend more than \$10 billion on products and services that are not used, including \$5 billion on food that is ultimately thrown out. The pursuit of wealth and economic demands can leave people with less time for family and friends, health and spiritual fulfilment. Australia's overwhelming response to the victims of the Indian Ocean tsunami shed light on our generosity and compassion. We cannot turn from the great issues facing our world, from environmental degradation to poverty to refugees to war. For many people in our world the light we offer may be their only hope. (http://www.acsjc.org.au/Content/media_releases/2005_09_13_1126594556.html)

REPORT – "LAWS FOR INSECURITY?"

As the Federal Government prepared to meet with State and Territory leaders concerning its anti-terrorism laws, a group of academics, community lawyers, civil rights advocates and other experts released the report: "Laws for Insecurity? A Report on the Federal Government's Proposed Counter-Terrorism Measures." The Report outlines the threats posed to civil liberties and the rule of law. The Report can be downloaded from the following site:
<http://www.amcran.org/images/stories/Laws%20for%20Insecurity%20Report.pdf>

UNIYA PAPER – ROADS TO RECONCILIATION

Mark Byrne examines the experience of transitional justice processes in South Africa and East Timor. He asks what lessons there might be from the truth commissions in these countries for reconciliation within Australia. He argues that to see ourselves as we have seen South Africa and East Timor, as fractured and in need of healing, would be a significant step on the road to reconciliation. A version of this paper is available at:
(http://www.uniya.org/talks/byrne_sep05.html)

NOMINATIONS CALLED – 2005 MERCY FOUNDATION SOCIAL JUSTICE AWARD

Through the Award, which is presented each year, the Foundation wishes to affirm and promote: the importance of work which is aimed at changing the things that cause people in our society to be excluded, impoverished or disempowered; and the importance of doing this work in a way which demonstrates an attitude of fundamental respect for all people, but especially those who suffer from poverty and are marginalised. Nominations close 31 October. For further details visit
http://www.mercyfoundation.com.au/about/a_outcomes.html#award or call (02) 9699 8726 or email projects@mercyfoundation.com.au

NATSICC – MESSAGE STICK

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council is planning to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of Pope John Paul II's visit to Alice Springs by holding its National Assembly in the Red Centre in October 2006. NATSICC's Councillors are sending a Message Stick through Deaneries, Parishes, Schools and communities. This event is a pilgrimage that will bring all of the States together in Alice Springs for the Assembly in 2006. For more information and to see how you can be involved visit:
http://www.natsicc.org.au/message_stick_relay.htm

ACMRO – "ONE IN JESUS CHRIST"

The Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office is taking registrations for a national conference on "Pastoral Care in a Culturally Diverse Australia". This conference will be of particular interest to Priests, Religious and Lay people involved in the pastoral care of migrants and refugees. It will be held at the Randwick Racecourse Function Centre in Sydney on 17 – 18 November. For further info contact (02) 6201 9848 and visit <http://www.acmro.catholic.org.au/>

CEA – NATIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE

Catholic Earthcare Australia is running a national conference, "Climate Change - Our Responsibility to Sustain God's Earth" from 18 – 20 November in Canberra. The event aims to establish a dialogue with the wider community on ways to tackle the serious problems which climate change brings and to alert the Church to the reality of this global phenomenon and the need for action. For further info call (02) 4655 4855 and visit: <http://www.catholicearthcareoz.net/>

CATHOLIC MISSION – WORLD MISSION DAY

World Mission Day is celebrated on Sunday 23 October 2005. The theme is 'Proclaim Life for All ... Witness, Liberate, Teach and Celebrate'. Catholic Mission National Director Father Terry Bell said that in the Year of the Eucharist we are all called to the struggle of liberation for humanity. "We who have received the gift of the Eucharist and the fullness of life it brings can't keep this to ourselves; it is our privilege to share this with all we encounter." Catholic Mission has produced extensive school and parish study kits to assist in fundraising, educating and animating about the work of mission. For more information phone Freecall 1800 257 296 or go to <http://www.catholicmission.org.au/wmd/index.asp>

CARITAS – MAKE POVERTY HISTORY

Caritas Australia has produced a short film introducing the Millennium Development Goals and the compelling facts on world poverty. The film invites you to get involved in the "Make Poverty History" campaign. For a free copy of the film on video or DVD contact Caritas on tel: (02) 9956 5799, email: thereser@caritas.org.au or visit: www.caritas.org.au

NEW RIGHTS BODY – RIGHTS AUSTRALIA

'Rights Australia' campaigns for more effective protection of human rights in Australia and aims to bring to the community's attention situations where: human rights are being neglected and abused; lives could be improved if human rights were protected; support can be given for better and lasting protection of human rights. Through the contributions of a large support base, RA plans to: Sustain a campaign for long term change; assist with the current human rights challenges in Australia; and provide a loud and sensible voice in the media on the issues which need a human rights perspective. For more info visit: <http://www.rightsaustralia.org.au>

OCTOBER NOTICES

OCTOBER 4: SEMINAR, "HALF WAY THERE: THE LONG WALK TO FREEDOM AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE IN SOUTH AFRICA" (NSW). Seminar by Francis Wilson of the University of Cape Town. 1.00pm to 2.30pm, Room 25, G2, Western Grounds, University of New South Wales, Sydney. Event sponsored by the Social Policy Research Centre. (refer: <http://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au/seminars/2005s2.htm>)

OCTOBER 4: SEMINAR, "PUNISHMENT AT THE CROSSROADS: CONTESTING DISCIPLINARY GOVERNANCE" (NSW). Speaker, Prof. Pat Carlen and Commentator, Dr Eileen Baldry will consider the cases for a contraction of prison populations and renewed experimentation with non-custodial methods of responding to crime in the light of ever-increasing public punitiveness and ever-rising prison populations. 5.30 to 7.30pm, Assembly Hall, Level 4 (street level) Sydney University Law School, 173-175 Phillip Street, Sydney. RSVP to bronwynf@law.usyd.edu.au or (02) 9351 0239. (refer: <http://www.criminology.law.usyd.edu.au/seminars.htm#beyond>)

OCTOBER 5: EVENT, "A CONVERSATION WITH RAVI NAIR" (NSW). The Edmund Rice Centre is supporting the visit to Sydney of Ravi Nair, Director of the South Asian Human Rights Documentation Centre, New Delhi, India. Ravi has a particular interest in the area of terrorism and the steps regional governments have taken to combat it. He frequently represents regional concerns to UN and other international forums. 10.00 to 11.30am, the Edmund Rice Centre, First Floor, 9 Alexandra Ave, Croydon, Sydney. Recommended donation \$5.00. RSVP on 0407 469 862 or email michael@erc.org.au (refer: <http://www.erc.org.au/events/October.shtml>)

OCTOBER 5: PUBLIC LECTURE, "THE GREAT WAR OF CIVILISATION: THE CONQUEST OF THE MIDDLE EAST" (NSW). The Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Sydney presents Dr Robert Fisk giving a public lecture on his groundbreaking new book. All welcome. RSVP to reign.haub@arts.usyd.edu.au. 12 noon to 2.00pm, Stephen Roberts Lecture Theatre, Eastern Avenue, The University of Sydney. (refer: <http://www.arts.usyd.edu.au/centres/cpacs/seminars.htm>)

OCTOBER 5 – 6: ACFID HUMANITARIAN FORUM, "BALANCING COMPLEXITY: IDEALISM, REALITY AND EFFECTIVENESS IN RESPONSE" (ACT). The Australian Council for International Development is convening a two day conference in Canberra. Speakers include Dr Hugo Slim, Malcolm Fraser, Rev Tim Costello, Major General Mark Evans (Department of Defence) and Dr Helen Durham (ICRC). Convened at The Chifley, Northbourne Ave. For further information and registration details visit: <http://www.acfid.asn.au/events&training/humanitarianforum2005.htm>

OCTOBER 6: WORKSHOP, "LOOKING TO THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE HOPE OF RESTORING THE INTEGRITY OF CREATION" (NSW). Social Justice and Ecology Network Macarthur presents a workshop in the series 'Meeting Christ in Creation' - A laypersons foundation for an Ecological understanding of the Christian Faith and a Christian background to Sustainability. 7.30pm Mary Immaculate Parish Hall, Emerald Drive , Eaglevale. (Near Aquamarine Drive) Enquiries ph: (02) 9820 7394 or (02) 46294 290. (refer: <http://www.catholicearthcareoz.net/events.html>)

OCTOBER 7: PUBLIC FORUM, "DEMONISING THE MUSLIMS" (NSW). Prof. Ahmad Shboul, Arab & Islamic Studies, Sydney University and Dr Chris Hartley, Religious Studies, Sydney University consider the truth about Islam, terrorism and the clash of civilisations. Politics in the Pub. 6.00 to 7.45pm, Gaelic Club, 64 Devonshire St, Surry Hills, Sydney. (refer: <http://www.politicsinthepub.org>)

OCTOBER 8: EVENT, "TRIBUTE TO HT LEE" (NSW). A tribute to photojournalist and independent film maker HT Lee. Speakers including: Andrew Refshauge, Andrew Ferguson, Katherine Thomson, Kim Cago. Performances by Edna Kenney and choir. Entry by donation. 2.00 to 6.00pm, Gaelic Club, 64 Devonshire St, Surry Hills (upstairs)

OCTOBER 9: WORKSHOP, "FAITH, SPIRITUALITY & ECOLOGY" (Qld). An Interfaith dialogue toward sustainable futures for humanity and planet earth is a workshop that seeks to gather together members of diverse faiths and spirituality traditions from communities to share and engage in dialogue on their beliefs, understanding, perspectives and practices on the workshop theme. 12 Noon to 6.00pm, at the Multi-Faith Centre, Griffith University, Nathan Campus, 170 Kessels Road, Nathan QLD. Cost \$12. To book please contact the Multi-Faith Centre on (07) 3735 7052 or e-mail to Multi-faith-Centre@griffith.edu.au

OCTOBER 10: WORKSHOP, "CHILDREN WHO WITNESS VIOLENCE" (QLD). A workshop presented by Queensland Churches Together and the Joint Churches Domestic Violence Prevention Project. 9.00am to 12.30pm, Old Bishopsbourne, St Francis College, Baroona Road, Milton. Free entry, lunch to follow. Donation towards cost of lunch appreciated. Bookings by 3 October on (07) 3369 6792 or qctcws@tpg.com.au

OCTOBER 11: SEMINAR, "DISABILITY, POVERTY AND HARDSHIP IN AUSTRALIA" (NSW). Seminar by Prof Peter Saunders. 1.00pm to 2.30pm, Room 25, G2, Western Grounds, University of New South Wales, Sydney. Event sponsored by the Social Policy Research Centre. (refer: <http://www.sprc.unsw.edu.au/seminars/2005s2.htm>)

OCTOBER 11: PUBLIC LECTURE, "'ALLIES BUT NOT FRIENDS': ANTI-AMERICANISM IN AUSTRALIA" (Vic). Presented by Associate Professor Ann Capling, Head of the Department of Political Science at the University of Melbourne. Annual Marion Adams Memorial Lecture, Faculty of Arts. 6.30 to 7.30pm, Public Lecture Theatre, Old Arts Building, University of Melbourne. Enquiries: (03) 8344 4332. (refer: http://events.unimelb.edu.au/eventid_2089.html)

OCTOBER 12: PEACE WORKSHOP, "EFRAT WOLFSON WORKSHOP" (WA). Efrat Wolfson, a 23 year old woman from Israel who is involved in Windows, an organisation working towards peace and reconciliation between Israeli and Palestinian people, will present an outline of Windows peace work including historical background about the Israel-Palestine conflict. Windows involves people working to promote acquaintance, understanding and reconciliation through educational and cultural programs, media and art. 5.45 to 8.00pm, Edmund Rice Centre for Social Justice, 24 High Street, Fremantle. Entry \$10 waged, \$5 unwaged/student. RSVP by 5 October on (08) 9335 4353 or edmundrice.centre@cathednet.wa.edu.au (refer: <http://www.wacoss.org.au/index.php?option=News&task=viewarticle&sid=505>)

OCTOBER 14: LAUNCH, "AND THE DANCE GOES ON" (NSW). An anthology of Australian Catholic women's stories commissioned by the Commission for Australian Catholic Women, will be launched at the School House, Mary Mackillop Place, 80 William Street, North Sydney. 6.00 for 6.30pm. RSVP essential by 7 October. Email: admin@cacw.catholic.org.au or Ph: 02 6201 9864. (refer: <http://www.cacw.catholic.org.au/>)

OCTOBER 14: LAUNCH, "AND THE DANCE GOES ON" (WA). An anthology of Australian Catholic women's stories will be launched at Geraldton Regional Library, Cathedral Avenue, Geraldton at 2.30p.m. Email: plm@wn.com.au of ph: 08 99642716 (refer: <http://www.cacw.catholic.org.au/>)

OCTOBER 14: PUBLIC FORUM, "TRUE SECURITY FOR AUSTRALIA OR LURCHING TOWARDS A PARANOID STATE?" (NSW). Cameron Murphy, President of the Council of Civil Liberties and Chris Puplick, Wollongong University consider the implications of surveillance, ID cards and new ASIO powers. Politics in the Pub. 6.00 to 7.45pm, Gaelic Club, 64 Devonshire St, Surry Hills, Sydney. (refer: <http://www.politicsinthepub.org>)

OCTOBER 16 – 22: NATIONAL EVENTS, "ANTI-POVERTY WEEK" (national). For events being held in communities around Australia for Anti-Poverty week, visit the official website: <http://www.antipovertyweek.org.au/events.php>

OCTOBER 17: PUBLIC FORUM, "THE COMMON GOOD AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS: THE CHALLENGE OF DISTRIBUTING WEALTH FAIRLY IN AUSTRALIA" (Qld). The Brisbane Catholic Justice and Peace Commission and the Social Action Office - CLRIQ are hosting the 4th Annual Common Wealth for the Common Good Address. The address will be delivered by Mr John Ryan, Executive Officer, Australian Catholic Commission for Employment Relations. 7.00pm in Marymac Community Centre, Ipswich Road, Annerley (Brisbane). RSVP on (07) 3891 5866 or email sao.admin@sao.clriq.org.au.

OCTOBER 18: PUBLIC LECTURE, "MULTICULTURALISM AND 'THE WAR ON TERROR'" (Vic). The Castan Centre for Human Rights Law presents Mr Petro Georgiou MP. 6.00 to 7.00pm Monash University Law Chambers, 472 Bourke St, Melbourne. RSVP: castan.centre@law.monash.edu.au or phone (03) 9905 3327. (refer: <http://www.fecca.org.au/Calendar/oct2005.html>)

OCTOBER 19 – 22: EXHIBITION, "SIEV X NATIONAL MEMORIAL" (ACT). A memorial event is planned at the Canberra City Uniting Church, 69 Northbourne Avenue, Canberra City, along with other events during the day. Musicians, choirs, powerful speakers will combine in a concert/ceremony to mark the event in more and more people's eyes. 6.00 for 6.30pm on 19 October for the memorial event. The exhibition will run from October 19-22. (refer: <http://www.sievxmemorial.com/news.html>)

OCTOBER 19: ROUNDTABLE FORUM, "WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?" (SA). A reflection on ways forward for non-Indigenous South Australians to respond to Indigenous South Australian concerns – organised by the Bob Hawke Prime Ministerial Centre and the International Human Rights Day SA committee. Speakers include: Commissioner Ted Mullighan, Children in State Care Commission of Enquiry; Dr Peter Ford, Vice President of the Australian Medical Association (SA); Professor Michael Rowan, Pro Vice Chancellor at UniSA; Ms Jane Sloane, State Manager (SA/NT), World Vision Australia; Mr Elliott Johnston, Former Commissioner of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. 5.15 for 5.30pm start, UniSA, City East Campus, Basil Hetzel Building, Mutual Community Lecture Theatre (H2-02). Entrance off Frome Rd, just down from North Terrace. (refer: www.hawkecentre.unisa.edu.au)

OCTOBER 20: EVENT, "NOSTRA AETATE 40 YEARS AND BEYOND " (NSW). This event will commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council's Declaration "Nostra Aetate" on the relation of the Catholic Church to non-Christian religions. The achievements in interfaith dialogue of the last forty years, especially with the Jewish people, will be honoured and future prospects considered. Chaired by Her Excellency, Prof. Marie Bashir AC and to include the Australian launch of Edward Idris Cardinal Cassidy's new book, "Rediscovering Vatican II - Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue". Organised by the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies and the St Thomas More Society. 5.30pm, The Great Synagogue, 187a Elizabeth Street, Sydney. RSVP essential by 17 October on (02) 9231 1006. (refer: <http://www.cacw.catholic.org.au/news/cww.asp?id=511>)

OCTOBER 21: PUBLIC FORUM, "ARE WE ALL SUFFERING AFFLUENZA?" (NSW). Mr Phil Glendenning and Prof. Frank Stilwell respond to the well-being manifesto. Politics in the Pub. 6.00 to 7.45pm, Gaelic Club, 64 Devonshire St, Surry Hills, Sydney. (refer: <http://www.politicsinthepub.org>)

OCTOBER 22: EVENT, "FAIR EARTH FAIR" (Qld). The Brisbane Catholic Justice and Peace Commission and the Justice Reference Group of the Sisters of Mercy, Brisbane and other groups are holding a Fair Earth Fair at All Hallows' School, Brisbane, from 11.00am to 4.00pm. The theme of the fair is living in environmentally sustainable and just ways. Come along and get lots of useful information in interesting and enjoyable ways. (refer: <http://www.uq.net.au/cjpc/>)

OCTOBER 22: CONFERENCE, "WHERE TO NOW? BUILDING THE NEXT PHASE OF THE REFUGEE MOVEMENT" (NSW). Workshops and Speakers consider future action. 10.00am – 4.00pm, UTS Market Campus. For further info call 0422 078 376 / 0421 326 987 or visit: http://www.ruralaustraliansforrefugees.org/template.php3?area=news&content=20050917_330

OCTOBER 23 – 29: REFUGEE WEEK, "DIFFERENT PAST, SHARED FUTURE" (NSW/Vic). The Refugee Council is working with other community organisations as part of two state based Refugee Week Steering Committees, one in Sydney and another in Melbourne, in order to assist and encourage the hosting of a broad range of activities and events during Refugee Week 2005. Refugee Week 2005 provides an excellent opportunity for communities to celebrate the immense contribution refugees and asylum seekers make to the Australian social, economic and cultural fabric. As the Week approaches, the RCOA Refugee Week 2005 webpage http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/html/Refugeeweek_2005/refugeeweek2005.html will support a Calendar of Events for each state and other relevant information.

OCTOBER 28: LAUNCH, "AND THE DANCE GOES ON" (NSW). An anthology of Australian Catholic women's stories will be launched at the Victor Peters Suite, 841 Hunter St, Newcastle, 6.00pm for 6.30pm. Email: mogordon@bigpond.net.au or tracey.edstein@mn.catholic.org.au (refer: <http://www.cacw.catholic.org.au/>)

OCTOBER 28: PUBLIC FORUM, "HOWARD'S IR LEGISLATION" (NSW). Speakers include John Buchanan, University of Sydney, Doug Cameron, AMWU, and John Robertson, Unions NSW. Politics in the Pub. 6.00 to 7.45pm, Gaelic Club, 64 Devonshire St, Surry Hills, Sydney. (refer: <http://www.politicsinthepub.org>)

OCTOBER 29: EVENT, "COMMUNITY INFORMATION SHARING" (NSW). Redfern Residents for Reconciliation, the NSW Reconciliation Council & ANTaR NSW are organising a community information sharing event. 2.00 to 4.00pm, Redfern Community Centre, Hugo St, Redfern. For further info call 95556138. (refer: <http://www.antar.org.au/>)

SEPTEMBER NEWS MONITOR

CENTACARE HEAD POINTS FINGER ON BAKHTIYARIS: Following a report indicating the Department of Immigration was wrong in its assessment that the deported Bakhtiyari family were not Afghans, the head of Adelaide's Centacare agency said that objective scrutiny of the Department would uncover "dishonesty" and "lack of process".

CLERGY SAY IRA DECOMMISSIONING METHODS CAN SERVE AS MODEL: The methods used in decommissioning the Irish Republican Army's paramilitary arsenal can serve as a model for peacekeepers elsewhere in the world, according to the two clergymen who witnessed the destruction of thousands of guns and hundreds of pounds of explosives.

REDEMPTORIST SEES "GHETTO" PIETY SIDELINING SOCIAL JUSTICE: Fr Bruce Duncan, who coordinates social justice studies at Melbourne's Yarra Theological Union, said that a renewed stress on older forms of piety is reflecting "a deepening cleavage within the Catholic community over the place of social justice in the ministry of the Church".

VATICAN UN NUNCIO SAYS UN SUMMIT SHIRKED NUCLEAR

DISARMAMENT: The Vatican nuncio at the United Nations criticised world leaders for avoiding the issues of nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation at this month's summit.

PNG BISHOPS CONDEMN MOVE TO LET GUILTY MPS KEEP POSTS: The Bishops of Papua New Guinea have said that the community must oppose efforts by MPs to avoid being dismissed for misconduct in office.

CATHOLIC WOMEN IN AUSTRALIA TELL STORIES IN NEW ANTHOLOGY: Catholic women from across Australia are sharing their deepest stories of faith and spirituality in a new anthology which is being billed as a "love story between Australian women and the Eternal Lover".

INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION FOR BISHOP'S JUSTICE IDEA: In the lead-up to Social Justice Sunday, Canberra-Goulburn auxiliary Bishop Patrick Power's ideas about restorative justice sparked interest from outside Australia.

BISHOP SAYS GOVT MUST ENSURE JUSTICE FOR HICKS: Following the resumption of military commission hearings at Guantanamo Bay, Broome's Bishop Christopher Saunders - who chairs the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council - called on the Australian Government to secure real justice for Australian citizen David Hicks.

CATHOLIC WELFARE SAYS POLICY TWEAKS AMOUNT TO LITTLE: A small number of single parents will be temporarily exempted from the Federal Government's welfare changes in an attempt to address concerns about the severity of the reforms, but changes the Government agreed to are "only the first steps in a long journey", according to Catholic Welfare Australia Executive Director Frank Quinlan.

LOBBY SAYS AID INCREASE NOT ENOUGH TO BEAT SHAME: The Australian Political Ministry Network welcomed Prime Minister John Howard's announcement to increase foreign aid to \$4 billion by 2010, but said we will still be languishing around 18th place of the 22 OECD donor countries.

CATHOLIC HEALTH SUPPORTS PROTECTION SCHEME FOR AGED CARE RESIDENTS: Catholic Health Australia has backed a government scheme announced that will strengthen protection for residents of aged care homes who have paid accommodation bonds.

EDMUND RICE CENTRE ACCUSES GOVT OF 'PEOPLE SMUGGLER TACTICS': There are fresh allegations from Sydney's Edmund Rice Centre that the Immigration Department issued false travel documents in an effort to get rid of long-term detainees.

SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT SAYS AFFLUENZA IS 'WASTING US AWAY': The 2005 Social Justice Statement decried the nation's culture of waste and busyness, warning that Australians are victims of "the disease of affluence".

PAX CHRISTI TELLS DOWNER TO FIGHT POVERTY, STOP ARMS RACE:

The Catholic peace organisation Pax Christi wrote to Foreign Affairs Minister Alexander Downer, requesting his delegation at the Millennium Plus Five (M+5) Summit to urge members to adopt worthwhile strategies that will assist in the alleviation of world poverty.

BOTH VATICAN AND HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH TROUBLED BY RWANDA PRIEST CHARGES: Both the Holy See and Human Rights Watch expressed strong misgivings following the arrest of Belgian missionary priest Fr Guy Theunis on war-crimes charges in Rwanda.

POPE SAYS VIOLENCE CANNOT SOLVE WORLD'S CONFLICTS: Violence cannot solve the world's conflicts, and it harms people and limits the future of humanity, Pope Benedict XVI said in a message to participants of an interreligious peace meeting.

BRITISH CATHOLIC GROUP PROTESTS AFTER INDONESIAN POLICE CLEARED OF KILLINGS: The Catholic Institute for International Relations denounced a ruling by an Indonesian Human Rights Court last week that acquitted two senior police officers accused of serious human rights violations.

POPE URGES LEADERS TO LIVE UP TO UN PLAN: Pope Benedict XVI appealed to world leaders to fulfill the commitments of the Millennium Development Goals and to put an end to poverty and hunger.

CHURCH BODY SLAMS IR POLICY PROPOSALS: The Howard Government's proposed workplace relations changes drew strong criticism from the Australian Catholic Commission for Employment Relations, in its major briefing paper released.

CHURCH PRESSURE WINS GOVT CHANGE OF HEART ON UNEMPLOYED: Federal cabinet said it would consider softening the harsh rules on the unemployed at the heart of its welfare crackdown, after lobbying from church-based groups including Catholic Welfare Australia.

SOUTH AFRICAN CARDINAL "SHOCKED" BY ZIMBABWE RUBBLE: Archbishop of Durban, Cardinal Wilfrid Napier, who was visiting Australia, told a Caritas media conference that he was shocked by the sight of rubble when he recently visited Zimbabwe.

BISHOP URGES GOVT TO TREAD SOFTLY ON IR: Bishop Patrick Dougherty of Bathurst (NSW) warned the Federal Government not to include material in the upcoming industrial relations legislation that will not be in the best interests of Australian workers.

CALL FOR CATHOLIC AGENCIES TO STRENGTHEN COLLABORATION: Catholic Welfare Australia CEO Frank Quinlan urged all Catholic Health and Welfare organisations to work together more closely to engage and assist Australia's poor.

VINNIES REPEATS POVERTY CONDEMNATION: In the light of Australian Bureau of Statistics figures released in August, the St Vincent de Paul Society's national operations manager John Falzon said it's a "national scandal" that Australians are being prevented from moving out of poverty.

- courtesy Church Resources' CathNews, stories in detail at <http://www.cathnews.com/news/509>

OCTOBER SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR - POVERTY

Internationally, people who lack food and shelter for minimal needs are said to be living in absolute poverty. Poverty in Australia, however, is generally relative poverty. People are considered to be poor if their living standards fall below an overall community standard, and they are unable to participate fully in ordinary activities of society. There are high rates of poverty among unemployed people, sole parent families, people with disabilities, Indigenous Australians and some groups of immigrants and refugees.

AUSTRALIA HAS THE 4TH HIGHEST LEVEL OF POVERTY IN THE DEVELOPED WORLD

- Over 700,000 children live in poor households: many of these live in jobless households, others live in homes where one or more adults are working in low-paid jobs
- Over 1 million Australians are in poverty even though living in households where one or more adults are in employment
- 3.6 million Australians live on under \$400 a week
- Many Australians cannot afford a doctor and half a million Australians wait four years to see a dentist
- Over 1 million jobseekers are competing for only 100,000 jobs
- The top 10 per cent of wealth holders own 45 per cent of household wealth, while the bottom 50 per cent own only 7 per cent.

REFLECTION

Instead of talking of waging war on terrorism, let us begin to talk about a war on poverty. This means recognizing the great imbalance in the distribution of the world's wealth and resources. Can countries like the United States and Australia continue to flaunt their extravagant life-styles in the face of the dire poverty of Third World countries?

During the Jubilee Year 2000, a campaign was conducted to remit or at least reduce the international debt of those Third World countries whose whole economy is locked into trying to pay off impossible interest debts. A fraction of the price of the war on terrorism would have gone a long way towards lessening those crippling debts. ...

Pope John Paul frequently reminds us that there can be no true or lasting peace unless it is underlined by genuine justice.

"It would be wonderful if you ... would declare yourselves men of peace in these terms: leaders prepared to offer a hand of friendship to your former enemies, leaders committed to a fairer distribution of the goods of this world, leaders who acknowledge the dignity of every human person, leaders brave enough to take the risk of loving, leaders renouncing hatred and fear, leaders who will boldly tell the world that every person is our brother or sister." - Bishop Pat Power - an Appeal to President Bush, 23/10/2003, the day of his visit to Australia

UN YEAR OF MICROCREDIT

The UN General Assembly designated 2005 as the International Year of Microcredit and has invited Governments, the United Nations system, concerned non-governmental organizations and others from civil society, the private sector and the media to join in raising the profile and building the capacity of the microcredit and microfinance sectors.

There is a growing community of institutions and organizations committed to eradicating poverty through the delivery of financial services to poor and low-income people throughout the world.

Known alternatively as 'microcredit' or the broader term 'microfinance', this highly successful partnership of public and private interests began to gain momentum in the mid-1970s as a serious tool for development. By the end of 2001, microcredit was provided to 26.8 million poor people—though this represents only about six percent of the estimated number of poor who could effectively use credit and related financial services including savings, insurance and asset-building systems. The need far exceeds current capacity.

The International Year of Microcredit 2005 underscores the importance of microfinance as an integral part of our collective effort to meet the Millennium Development Goals. The challenge before us is to address the constraints that exclude people from full participation in the financial sector. The International Year of Microcredit offers a pivotal opportunity for the international community to engage in a shared commitment to meet this challenge. Together, we can and we must build inclusive financial sectors that help people improve their lives. -

"The mission of the Year is: to promote and give momentum to sustainable microcredit and microfinance worldwide to highlight its contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals to build inclusive financial sectors that help people improve their lives." - UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan

1997-2006 UN Decade for the Eradication of Poverty
October 17 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
October 24 United Nations Day

WEBSITES

- National Coalition Against Poverty (NCAP)
www.bsl.org.au/ncapwebsite/poverty.htm
- United Nations www.un.org

**Australian Catholic Social Justice Council Leo XIII House, 19 MacKenzie Street,
PO Box 1615, North Sydney NSW 2059. 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.**