



ACSJC BRIEFING

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From the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council, the social justice and human rights agency of the Catholic Church in Australia - www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au

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FROM THE SECRETARIAT

Dear Friends,

You will be aware that pressure over the case of David Hicks has been building on the Australian and US governments over the past three months.

A growing number of public figures, many of them associated with the Coalition parties, have made similar calls to that of the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference for David Hicks to be given a prompt and just trial or released from Guantanamo.

The mounting pressure has brought about a change in the government's line. It now acknowledges that the delay of five years has been inappropriate and has made public that it is consistently pressuring the US to bring David Hicks to trial. The US has indicated what charges it is seeking to lay, but they must be approved by military judge. There are now undertakings that Mr Hicks would serve any sentence in Australia and that his time in detention would be taken into consideration at sentencing. A trial, however – especially a hasty one – may not bring him justice.

There is still widespread criticism of the standard of justice in the proposed military tribunals. Former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser has pointed out that, while the tribunal rules seem to prohibit evidence obtained through torture, “other rules make it likely that convictions may be achieved on such tainted evidence”. Second or third-hand hearsay evidence is to be permitted, he says, and the defence cannot test it or challenge its accuracy. The defence may be unable to see some classified evidence or know how it was obtained (refer: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/opinion/items/200702/s1849110.htm>). These points have also been made by constitutional lawyer Professor George Williams (refer: <http://news.sbs.com.au/insight/archive.php?daysum=2007-02-20>)

Further delays in the trial process will prolong the detention and a court that does not ensure adequate protections of the rule of law will not ensure a standard of fairness that we would rightly expect for ourselves and our fellow citizens if we had a case to answer before a court.

A number of groups, including religious leaders, human rights and legal organisations and media have made statements, produced resources and promoted action on this matter. For example:

- The call of the Australian Catholic Bishops for David Hicks to be given a prompt and fair hearing, should he have a case to answer, and for his prolonged detention to end can be found at: <http://www.acbc.catholic.org.au/bishops/confpres/200612011203.htm>
- The Uniting Church in Australia has called on the Federal Government to act immediately to ensure David Hicks is afforded a fair trial: <http://assembly.uca.org.au/news/mediareleases/2007/release0402007.htm>
- Web-based videos of the SBS *Insight* program 'Hicks on Trial' can be found at: <http://news.sbs.com.au/insight/topic.php?id=122#>
- The popular ABC TV program for schools, *Behind the News*, has a story, video and discussion questions on the circumstances of David Hicks at: http://www.abc.net.au/tv/btn/archive/Tuesday%20-%20Story%20Archive%20-%202007_Tuesday20February2007.htm ; <http://www.abc.net.au/tv/btn/video/>
- Amnesty International Australia has a 'Send a Letter to the PM' campaign calling for his detention to end and for Hicks to be returned to Australia for trial if he has a case to answer. Visit: http://www.amnesty.org.au/Act_now/action_centre/hrs-int/email_the_pm
- The GetUp campaign – “Bring David Hicks Home” at: http://www.getup.org.au/campaign/BillboardsForJustice.asp?campaign_id=63
- Statements from the Australian Lawyers Alliance and the Law Council of Australia at: <http://www.lawyersalliance.com.au/news.php?show=releases> ; <http://www.lawcouncil.asn.au/media.html>

These few examples are given for your information and consideration.

John Ferguson

National Executive Officer

CURRENT ISSUES/RESOURCES

BISHOP SAUNDERS REITERATES CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CALL FOR DAVID HICKS

In early February, Australian Prime Minister John Howard said he might have secured Hicks' release any time during the last five years but did not because that “would not be fair” to U.S. authorities. Bishop Saunders called Hicks' continued incarceration an “affront to human dignity and unacceptable to anybody who holds in high regard due processes of law and human rights in any real democracy. In December last year my brother bishops and I called for David Hicks to be given a prompt and just trial or returned to Australia. Well, that time has come – action is required now,” he told Catholic News Service. <http://www.catholicnews.co/data/stories/cns/0700842.htm>

POVERTY STUDY – ‘DROPPING OFF THE EDGE’

Extreme social disadvantage in Australia is real and measurable. Its endemic to a small number of locations in this country, and it can be fixed, according to major new research to be released on Wednesday. “Dropping off the Edge: the distribution of disadvantage in Australia” is the most comprehensive national study of its kind. The report, which is a joint project with Jesuit Social Services and Catholic Social Services Australia, is the third in a series of reports on the issue, written by researcher, Professor Tony Vinson, from the University of Sydney. The report finds that just 1.7 per cent of postcodes and communities across Australia account for more than seven times their share of top rank positions on the major factors that cause intergenerational poverty. Maps and more information about how to order this publication are available at <http://www.australiandisadvantage.org.au>

CAMPAIGN – ‘MAKE INDIGENOUS POVERTY HISTORY’

The Make Indigenous Poverty History Campaign continues in 2007 with 40 Days of Action for 40 Years of Inaction. To see how you can get involved in this campaign of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission and to obtain a wide range of resources go to <http://www.ncca.org.au/natsiec/indigenouspoverty>

NetAct NSW ELECTION KIT – ‘WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE’

In the lead-up to the NSW State Election, NetAct has released its election kit based on the Christian principles and values of human dignity, the common good, solidarity with and preference for those ‘made’ poor and ecological responsibility. The kit deals with policy issues including education, health care, Indigenous justice, rural development, water, workplace relations etc. The kit provides helpful advice on how to visit a politician. Particular sections of the kit or the whole kit can be downloaded at the following website: <http://www.scan.org.au/netact.html>

NCOSS NSW ELECTION PLATFORM – ‘A FAIRER NSW’

The Council of Social Service of NSW (NCOSS) has identified 15 simple things that the incoming NSW Government could do to make NSW a fairer place. Not all of them cost money. Many are about changing the way government works. All of them will make life better for the people of NSW. NCOSS has established a website identifying the issues and providing advice for further action. The website is: <http://afairernsw.net/>

CARITAS FESTIVAL OF GLOBAL CONCERN

Caritas Australia’s Festival of Global Concern is a three day, live in, Trans-Tasman event (13-15 April 2007) which will provide Year 11 and 12 students and their teachers with the opportunity to explore issues of justice, ecology, peace and development. The Festival will be held at St Joseph’s College in Hunters Hill, Sydney. The theme of the festival is “Generation Y Not?” The Festival aims to address both local and global issues of justice by providing a space for dialogue, networking and the sharing of ideas for action. For more information about the festival including cost, visit: <http://www.caritas.org.au/events/festivalGlobalConcern.htm>

GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOODS AND THE NSW STATE ELECTIONS

The Columban Missionary Society is concerned that a future NSW Government will lift its Moratorium on the commercial growing of genetically modified food crops in the State. The legislation is up for review in 2008. The Columban Mission Society is concerned that genetic engineering (GE), is totally new and imprecise, that genetically modified foods pose unknown health risks and the risks connected with the technology also spread into the wider environment. Rev Dr Charles Rue SSC is calling for immediate action by voters to ask all candidates where they stand on renewal of the Moratorium. For further info contact Columban Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation on (02) 9352 8000 or www.columban.org.au

EDUCATION MODULE – ‘VOICES OF AUSTRALIA’

An educational tool to help combat racism and promote a culture of respect and equality among high school students around Australia has been launched by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC). The resource provides an invaluable tool to help students reap the rewards of living in a community where a quarter of the population has at least one parent born in another country. Copies of the module can be found at:
<http://www.humanrights.gov.au/education/voices>

POSITION VACANT – NSW FAIR WEAR CAMPAIGN WORKER

Fair Wear, the consumer campaign aimed at stopping the exploitation of outworkers and sweatshop workers in the clothing industry is seeking a campaign worker. The position is in Sydney. 20 hours per week on SACS Grade 3. Applications close Monday 12th March, 2007. For more info on Fair Wear visit <http://www.fairwear.org.au> For a job description or more information on the position please email fairwear@awatw.org.au or call (02) 9793 9062 or 0409 841 208.

AMNESTY CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY

Amnesty International is part of the growing campaign for a world without executions. The death penalty violates one of the fundamental human rights - the right to life itself. To take a part in opposing the use of the death penalty, anywhere, for any reason, visit the amnesty webpage on this campaign. Resources and helpful advice for action:
http://www.amnesty.org.au/Act_now/campaigns/adp

NEW BOOK – “A PATH IS MADE BY WALKING IT”

Sr Patricia Pak Poy RSM is the editor of this work reflecting on the Australian network to ban landmines. The book is published by David Lovell Publishing. Contributors to the book Alexander Downer, Cornelio Sommaruga, David Atwood, Judith Blyth, Ian Buckley, Geoffrey Cameron, Ada Cheung, Judith Gardam, Janette Gray, Andrew Hamilton, David Johnson, Michael Kelly, William Maley, Katharine Massam, Patricia Pak Poy, Peter Phillips, Paul Power, John Rodsted, John Scott-Murphy, Eric Sidoti, Jody Williams, Mark Zirnsak. For contact information visit:
<http://australia.icbl.org/aboutus.htm>

NEW JOURNAL – “ETHICS AND SOCIAL WELFARE”

A new journal being produced by the Taylor and Francis Group will focus on the ethical issues surrounding social welfare practice and policy. Articles with a social policy focus are welcomed as well as those covering professional practice in social and health care, community development and youth work. Full length articles of 4,000-7,000 words can be submitted to:

D.J.Clifford@ljmu.ac.uk . Contributions of between 750 and 2500 words on Ethical Issues in Practice can be sent to a.a.maynard@anglia.ac.uk. Book reviews and commentary to c.o.beckett@anglia.ac.uk. For further info on the journal's 'Instructions for Authors,' visit the journal website www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/17496535.asp

REPORT ON ORGAN HARVESTING

The Coalition to Investigate the Persecution of Falun Gong (CIPFG) has called on federal Australian government and state governments to ban transplant tourism to China. The call was made in the context of a revised version of a report by Matas/Kilgour, which addresses the allegation whether organs are harvested from Falun Gong practitioners who were killed in the process. The initial report was released July 6, 2006. The Revised Report into Allegations of Organ Harvesting maintains that it is true. For further information, visit:

http://www.erc.org.au/index.php?module=announce&ANN_user_op=view&ANN_id=39 or www.organharvestinvestigation.net

ACMRO HANDBOOK

The Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office has prepared a handbook that will assist dioceses and religious congregations to prepare nominations and visa applications for religious workers under the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Labour Agreement. If you want a copy of the handbook contact (02) 6201 9827 and adminofficer@acmro.catholic.org.au

NEW BOOK – “MINISTRY IN DISASTER SETTINGS”

A new book by Uniting Church minister the Rev. Dr Stephen Robinson provides insight into the affect of disaster on clergy and church workers and points to the biblical hope that can be offered to hurting people and those who try to help them. Dr Robinson is the Uniting Church’s representative on the NSW State Disaster Recovery Committee. His book "Ministry in Disaster Settings: Lessons from the Edge" is based on interviews with over 15 ministers, chaplains and trauma workers. Many of those had involvement in large-scale disasters such as Granville, Thredbo, Port Arthur and other tragic events. The book costs \$25 plus postage and handling. More information from Rev. Dr Stephen Robinson, PO Box 69, Lugarno, NSW 2210, and (02) 9153 8653 or emergencyministry@lpuc.org.au

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! - 2007 SOCIAL JUSTICE DIARY

The 2007 Diary focuses on the theme of globalisation. It includes the dates of significant events, anniversaries and special days which

DISCUSSION GUIDE – WORLD DAY OF PEACE MESSAGE 2007

On 1 January, the Holy Father delivered his World Day of Peace message. The theme of his message is *The Human Person, The Heart of Peace*. The ACSJC discussion guide consists of a brief overview of the Pope's message, some points for reflection and prayer. A helpful resource for group and classroom discussion. Download at: <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au>

STILL AVAILABLE! - 2007 SOCIAL JUSTICE DIARY

The 2007 Diary focuses on the theme of globalisation. It includes the dates of significant events, anniversaries and special days which celebrate particular aspects of social justice and highlight the theme, and provides 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.

SERIES PAPER: CHOICE FOR WHOM? A DISCUSSION OF THE 2005 INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS LAWS

Catholic Social Justice Series No 58. At a time when Australia's industrial relations laws are undergoing radical change, Dr Tim Battin offers an analysis of the theory underpinning the 2005 industrial relations legislation, and measures that rationale against the precepts of Catholic social teaching. In addition to considering the legislation's moral implications, Dr Battin discusses some of its likely practical and social effects.

2006 SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY STATEMENT

The 2006 Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Social Justice Sunday Statement is entitled 'The Heart of Our Country - dignity and justice for our Indigenous sisters and brothers'. An order form for the Statement is available on the ACSJC website plus an electronic copy for download: <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au>. For associated resources visit the ACSJC website or call (02) 9956 581.

SERIES PAPER: CATHOLICS AND NATURE: TWO HUNDRED YEARS OF ENVIRONMENTAL ATTITUDES IN AUSTRALIA

Catholic Social Justice Series No 57. Concern for the environment has played a significant role in the Catholic Church in Australia since the 19th century. Fr Charles Rue SSC traces the development of environmental thought in Australian Catholicism.

(\$6.60 a copy, plus postage. Postage rates for Catholic Social Justice Series Papers: 1 copy \$1; 2-3 copies \$1.45; 4-5 copies \$2.45)

MARCH NOTICES

SPIRITUALITY IN THE PUB (NATIONAL). For addresses and events around Australia in March visit <http://www.catalyst-for-renewal.com.au/news.htm>

CURRENT EXHIBITION – ‘FOOTPRINTS THROUGH THE BUSH’ (VIC). Presenting artwork by six Koorie Elders who took up art later in life, this new exhibition presents their cultural journeys from the past to the present. Featuring works by Aunty Bunta Patten, Uncle Herb Patten, Aunty Gwen Garoni, Aunty Frances Gallagher, Uncle Howard Edwards and Uncle Kennedy Edwards. Curated by Sharon West, Indigenous Arts Unit, RMIT University, with support from Moreland City Council. Bunjilaka Aboriginal Centre, Melbourne Museum. Enter via Rathdowne St.

1 MARCH. PUBLIC MEETING – ‘NUCLEAR AUSTRALIA?’ (VIC). Speakers: Dr. Helen Caldicott; Rebecca Bear-Wingfield (Kokotha leader, reporting on the World Indigenous Uranium Summit); Dr. Tilman Ruff (International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear weapons); Dave Sweeney (Australian Conservation Foundation). 6.00pm, Fitzroy Town Hall - corner of Moor and Napier Streets, Fitzroy. Organised by the Palm Sunday Alliance for a Nuclear Free Future. For info call (03) 8344 1637 or visit <http://www.nuclearfoolsday.org>

1 MARCH. WORKSHOP – ‘CHILDREN AND REFUGEE PROTECTION AND THE CHALLENGES OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS’ (NSW). The Faculty of Law at the University of Sydney is hosting this event at which Associate Prof. Mary Crock will discuss key issues with Prof. James Hathaway (expert on international refugee law) and Mrs Jennifer Burn (Senior Lecturer in Law and head of the UTS ‘Anti-Slavery’ project. 2.30–5.00pm, Sydney Law School, 173 Phillip Street, Sydney. Cost: Migration Agents/Practitioners \$150; Full time students/unemployed \$30; others \$50. For further info contact (02) 9351 0238 or valc@law.usyd.edu.au (refer: http://www.law.usyd.edu.au/CLE/docs_pdfs/2007/Refugee_workshop01032007.pdf)

1 MARCH. WORKSHOP WITH JOHN DEAR SJ AND OTHERS – ‘THE ROAD TO PEACE: THE WAY OF NON-VIOLENCE’ (QLD). Sponsored by Pace e Bene Australia and supported by the Social Action Office of the Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes Qld. 8.45am for 9.00am to 4.00pm, Multi-Faith Centre, Griffith University (Building N35). Co-facilitators: Toh Swee-Hin and Virginia Cawagas. \$100 and \$60 concession. Places are strictly limited to 50; completed registration form with full payment essential to secure your place.

Enquiries: PO Box 8304, Woolloongabba Qld 4102; phone (07) 3891 5866; email sao.admin@sao.clriq.org.au. Web: <http://www.paceebene.org.au/johndearinaust.html>.

1 MARCH. PUBLIC MEETING – ‘HUMAN RIGHTS: HAVE WE LOST OUR DIGNITY?’ (VIC). Addressing this Melbourne Conversations and Future Leaders event will be Major Michael Mori, defence counsel for Guantanamo Bay detainee David Hicks; Professor Larissa Behrendt, Director of Research, Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning, University of Technology, Sydney; Julian Burnside QC. 6.00–7.30pm, BMW Edge, Federation Square, Cnr Flinders & Swanston Streets, Melbourne. For further info visit: <http://www.futureleaders.com.au/discussions/index.php>

2–6 MARCH. JOHN DEAR SJ IN PERTH:

2 March. Address, ‘Jesus the rebel and civil disobedience’ 7.00–9.00 pm, Christian Centre For Social Action, 879 Albany Hwy, East Vic Park. Cost: \$5–\$10 Contact: (08) 9472 4227 or ccsa@arach.net.au.

3–4 March. Retreat, ‘Jesus and nonviolence – deepening the journey’. Penola, Josephite Retreat Centre, Safety Bay. 9.00am Saturday 3 March–5.00pm Sunday 4 March. Cost: \$150–175 Contact: (08) 9444 7808 or hibby@mac.com

6 March. Seminar, ‘Called to follow Jesus in an age of violence’. Seminar for teachers, youth workers, chaplains working with young people. 9.00am–4.00pm. South Perth Church of Christ, Como. Cost: \$25–70. For location and booking details contact (08) 9443 5055 or epyc@wa.su.org.au

6 March. Interfaith Forum, ‘Our God is non-violent?’. 6.30–9.00pm, University of Western Australia, Geography Lecture Theatre 2. Cost: \$10–15. Contact: (08) 9444 7808 or hibby@mac.com

(refer: <http://www.paceebene.org.au/johndearinaust.html>)

5 MARCH. EVENT – ‘STOP, REVIVE, SURVIVE ON THE JOURNEY TO PEACE & JUSTICE (NSW). Wellspring Community Australia, Iona Community, Scotland, and the Diocese of Parramatta invite you to an evening of sharing and reflection with Kathy Galloway, Leader of the Iona Community. 6.00pm at Our Lady of the Rosary Parish Hall, Swanston Street, St Marys. There will be a bookstall with some of Kathy’s books and other Iona material. RSVP by 2 March on (02) 8838 3413, 0439 039 449, (02) 4567 7269 or 0415 585 918.

5–6 MARCH. PROGRAM – ‘MISSION AND JUSTICE’ (NSW). As part of the Loyola Institute’s ‘Faith Doing Justice Program’, Ms Sandie Cornish will run this program reflecting on Scripture, Church teaching, and key Jesuit documents, in order to deepen participants’ appreciation of the call to justice as an essential dimension of the mission of the Church, the Province, and of each Christian. The program will be run at Canisius CIS in Sydney. For further details visit http://loyola.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=46 or call (02) 8918 4152

6 MARCH. LECTURE – ‘ANCIENT WISDOM FOR A MODERN WORLD’ (NSW). As part of the annual Benedictine Spirituality Lecture Series, Sr Clare Condon sgs will speak and Gerard Windsor will respond at this event at Rosebank College. 7.30pm, Rosebank College, 1A Harris Rd, Five Dock, Sydney. For further info contact (02) 9713 3127 or bbeinke@rosebank.nsw.edu.au

6 MARCH. SEMINAR – ‘INTEGRATING REFUGEES IN TO EMPLOYMENT - SOME EXPERIENCE FROM EUROPE’ (VIC). The background of refugees is extremely diverse in terms of their ability to speak the ‘new’ language, adjust to a new culture, and their work skills, while many have backgrounds involving trauma and other types of disadvantage. Prof. Richard Pearson will discuss some of the approaches adopted by the UK and other European governments in seeking their integration in to employment. This event is hosted by the Contemporary Europe Research Centre at the University of Melbourne. 1.00–2.00pm, Room 212, 234 Queensberry Street Carlton, Melbourne. For further info contact (03) 8344 9502 or cerc@cerc.unimelb.edu.au (refer: http://events.unimelb.edu.au/eventid_3452.html)

7 MARCH. LAUNCH – ‘IT’S ABOUT TIME’ (NSW). The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission will launch the paper ‘It’s about Time: Women, Men, Work and Family’. 10.30am at Blake Dawson, Waldron, Grosvenor Place, Level 36, 225 George Street, Sydney. RSVP essential on (02) 9284 9608. (refer: <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/events/>)

7 MARCH. PUBLIC LECTURE – ‘EMPOWERING WOMEN IN SRI LANKA TO REBUILD THEIR LIVES AFTER THE TSUNAMI’ (VIC). School of Social and Environmental Enquiry Development Studies is sponsoring the International Women's Development Agency Global Education Tour 2007. Speaker, Ms Rohini Weerasinghe, Director of Kantha Shakthi Sri Lanka, has been involved in grassroots projects aimed at helping women cope with their grief and trauma and promoting support networks in the most badly affected areas of Hambantota and Matar districts. 10.00am–12noon, SSEE Seminar Room Basement, Level 1, 221 Bouverie Street, Carlton, Melbourne. For further info contact (03) 8344 0806 or violetas@unimelb.edu.au (refer: http://events.unimelb.edu.au/eventid_3577.html)

7 MARCH. SEMINAR – ‘SOCIAL ENGINEERING AND INDIGENOUS DEMOGRAPHY’ (ACT). John Taylor, Deputy Director and Senior Fellow, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research critiques the implications of suggestions in some quarters of government, academia, think tanks and the media for public policy to support what is seen to be an inevitable migration of Indigenous population away from remote settlements. He will consider the potential implications of such an argument based on what we know of regional migration fields. 12.30–2.00pm, CAEPR Seminar Room GO58, Ground Floor, Hanna Neumann Bldg #21, The Australian National University, Canberra. For further info contact (02)6125 0587 or admin.caepr@anu.edu.au (refer: <http://www.anu.edu.au/caepr/events07.php>)

8 MARCH. LECTURE – ‘HUMAN RIGHTS CHALLENGES IN TRYING GRAVE TIMES’ (VIC). The Castan Centre for Human Rights Law is hosting this lecture that will be given by Howard Morrison QC, an expert in international criminal law. 6.00–7.00pm followed by light refreshments. Monash University Law Chambers, 472 Bourke St, Melbourne. RSVP to castan.centre@law.monash.edu.au or on (03) 9905 3327 (refer: <http://www.law.monash.edu.au/castancentre/events/morrison-flier.pdf>)

8–9 MARCH. JOHN DEAR SJ IN ADELAIDE:

8 March. Address, ‘Human Rights and Nonviolence in a Culture of War and Injustice’. 6.15 pm, UniSA City East Campus, Mutual Community Theatre, Basil Hetzel Building. Register via The Hawke Centre website at www.hawkecentre.unisa.edu.au or on 08 8302 0215

9 March. Workshop, ‘Nonviolence: Our Challenge for the Future’. 9.30am–12 noon, Cardijn College, Honeypt Rd. Noarlunga Downs. Contact: (08) 8186 6993 or ogrady.d@bigpond.net.au

9 March. Address, ‘The Gospel of Nonviolence for Today’s World’. 7.30–9.30pm at Adelaide College of Divinity Campus, Room S1 - 34 Lipsett Terrace, Brooklyn Park. Cost: \$10. Register on (08) 8416 8471 or liz.morris@flinders.edu.au

(refer: <http://www.paceebene.org.au/johndearinaust.html>)

9 MARCH, FORUM – ‘ISSUES CONCERNING CHILDREN WORLDWIDE’ (NSW). As part of Catalyst for Renewal’s ‘Forum of the Future’, Fr Patrick Byrne svd, General Secretary of the ‘Children’s Mission’ in Rome will address many issues relating to the wellbeing of children and adolescents. 6.00–8.00pm, The crypt, St Patrick’s Church Hill. Entry by Donation. Contact (02) 9816 4262. (refer: <http://www.catalyst-for-renewal.com.au>)

9 MARCH. FORUM – ‘STOLEN WAGES, THE WAY FORWARD (NSW). Addressing this free HREOC legal forum will be: Senator Russell Trood, Member of the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs Inquiry; Robynne Quiggin of the Aboriginal Trust Fund Repayment Scheme; and Jonathon Hunyor, Acting Director of the HREOC Legal Section. The forum will be chaired by John von Doussa QC, President of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. 1.00–2.30pm in the Hearing Room, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, Level 8, Piccadilly Tower, 133 Castlereagh Street, Sydney. RSVP to Associate@humanrights.gov.au (refer: <http://www.unaa.org.au/praxis.php/category/view/4>)

10–11 MARCH, NATIONAL INTERFAITH FESTIVAL (QLD)

A national interfaith festival and retreat. Religious life, culture and arts will be showcased in Maleny in Queensland’s Sunshine Coast Hinterland (75 minutes drive north of Brisbane). Each day will highlight aspects of the richness of religious faiths. At the same time, there will be the opportunity to explore how all can come together as neighbours in what is one of the world’s most spiritually diverse countries. Opens daily at 8.30am at Maleny Showgrounds, Stanley River Road, Maleny. Gate tickets from 8.15am. Cost, registration and program details at <http://www.nif.org.au/home.htm>

11 MARCH, FORUM: ‘IRAQ AND THE GOSPEL OF NON-VIOLENCE’ (TAS). John Dear SJ will address this Ecumenical Peace Forum sponsored by the Tasmanian Council of Churches and Pace e Bene. 2.00pm, Hobart City Church of Christ, 8 Goulburn Street, Hobart. Contact 6234 2543 or tectas@bigpond.net.au. (refer: <http://www.paceebene.org.au/johndearinaust.html>)

13 MARCH. LECTURE – ‘ANCIENT WISDOM FOR A MODERN WORLD’ (NSW). As part of the annual Benedictine Spirituality Lecture Series, Fr Frank Brennan SJ will speak and Wendy McCarthy AO will respond at this event at Rosebank College. 7.30pm, Rosebank College, 1A Harris Rd, Five Dock, Sydney. For further info contact (02) 9713 3127 or bbeinke@rosebank.nsw.edu.au

13–14 MARCH, JOHN DEAR SJ IN MELBOURNE:

13 March. Day Retreat, ‘Exploring Gospel Nonviolence’. 9.30am–4.30pm at the Pallottine Community, 85 Studley Park Road, Kew. Cost \$60, \$45.

14 March. Lecture, ‘Peacemaking in a violent world’. 9.30am–12.30pm at Whitley College, 50 The Avenue, Parkville. Cost \$25.

14 March. Lecture, ‘Peacemaking in a world of fear’. 7.30–10.00pm at Collins St. Baptist Church, 174 Collins St. Melbourne. Cost \$20, \$15

(refer: <http://www.paceebene.org.au/johndearinaust.html>)

15 MARCH. LECTURE – ‘THE GOSPEL OF NONVIOLENCE FOR TODAY’S WORLD’ (ACT). Public lecture by Fr John Dear. 6.00 – 8.00pm at the Australian Catholic University, Blackfriars Building, Philip Avenue Canberra. Entry by gold-coin donation. (refer: <http://www.paceebene.org.au/johndearinaust.html>)

16–17 MARCH. CONFERENCE – ‘RESPONDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE’ (QLD). The Brisbane Catholic Justice and Peace Commission and the Social Action Office of the Qld Conference of Religious Institutes are hosting the conference ‘Responding to Climate Change: The Call to Ecological Conversion’. A range of expert speakers and practical workshops will address the causes and impact of climate change, the scriptural and theological basis for a Christian commitment to environmental action, and about what people can do in their home, school, parish, agency and community to respond. It will be held on the evening of 16 March and all day Saturday 17 March at St James’ College, Fortitude Valley. Cost is \$50/\$30. To find out more and to register, please phone (07) 3336 9351 or e-mail emericka@bne.catholic.net.au

17 MARCH. YCW ST. PATRICK’S DAY HARBOUR CRUISE (NSW). Young Christian Workers Parramatta are organising a four hour cruise around Sydney harbour. Light food, DJ and good company. 8.00pm–12.00am departing from Darling Harbour (near the Convention Centre). Cost: \$45/\$40 (concession) For further info and to purchase tickets contact (02) 9682 6719 or sharmila@ycw.org.au

18 MARCH. PUBLIC MEETING – ‘NO GUANTANAMO IN AUSTRALIA’ (QLD). Refugee Action Collective Queensland, Just Rights Queensland and Stop the War Collective present this public meeting with Terry Hicks, father of Guantanamo Bay detainee David Hicks, Bernie Neville, with a slide-show expose of the new facility. Speakers from Refugee Action Collective the Council of Civil Liberties. Find out about the new 800-bed maximum-security prison being built a thousand kilometres from the Australian mainland on Christmas Island. From 10.00am, TLC Building, 16 Peel St, South Brisbane. For further info contact 0410 253 969 or bronwen@rac-qld.org (refer: [http://www.barc.org.au/cms/index.php?module=calendar&calendar\[view\]=list](http://www.barc.org.au/cms/index.php?module=calendar&calendar[view]=list))

20 MARCH. HARMONY DAY EVENT (NSW). Youth for Human Rights Australia (YFHRA) is organising this event. The host is the Hon. David Clark MLC and speakers include Dr Sev Ozdowski OAM, the former Human Rights Commissioner. State Parliament House Theatre, Macquarie Street, Sydney. For further info contact YFHRA at 02 95524677 or email info@humanrights.org.au (refer: <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/events/>)

21 MARCH. FORUM – ‘ELIMINATING RACISM: VALUING DIVERSITY’ (VIC). On the UN’s global day for the elimination of racism, this forum will consider anecdotal and research-based evidence about racism and discrimination in Australia and strategies to counter these phenomena. A range of speakers from around Australia. 9.00am–1.00pm, Victoria University, Flinders Street Campus, Melbourne. Cost: \$20. RSVP on (03) 9919 5478 or sue.butterworth@vu.edu.au (refer: http://www.vu.edu.au/Research/ICEPA/Events/Diversity/Diversity/indexdl_86120.aspx)

22–23 MARCH. PROGRAM – ‘MISSION AND JUSTICE’ (VIC). As part of the Loyola Institute’s ‘Faith Doing Justice Program’, Ms Sandie Cornish will run this program reflecting on Scripture, Church teaching, and key Jesuit documents, in order to deepen participants’ appreciation of the call to justice as an essential dimension of the mission of the Church, the Province, and of each Christian. The program will be run at Campion CIS in Melbourne. For further details visit http://loyola.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=46 or call (02) 8918 4152

26–27 MARCH. QCOSS CONFERENCE 2007 (QLD). The Queensland Council of Social Service’s conference will focus on the theme of ‘Poverty, Prosperity, & Progress: Ensuring the inclusion of all Queenslanders’. Issues addressed will include the European anti-poverty plan and a national perspective on the success of anti-poverty plans in Australia, advocacy, prevention and early intervention, spatial poverty, homelessness and best practice examples of addressing poverty in Aboriginal Australia. To be held at the Sofitel, Brisbane. For cost and registration details visit: <http://www.acoss.org.au/Events.aspx?displayID=3>

28 MARCH. PUBLIC MEETING – ‘BUILDING OUR OWN GUANTANAMO BAY PRISON’ (VIC). The Refugee Action Collective and the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre present this public meeting with Julian Burnside QC, mental health expert Guy Coffey from Foundation House, Anna Sampson from A Just Australia and others. Find out about the new 800-bed maximum-security prison being built a thousand kilometres from the Australian mainland on Christmas Island. 7.00–9.00pm, Kaleide Theatre, RMIT, 350 Swanston Street, Melbourne. For further info contact 0438 399 973 or refugeeaction@hotmail.com (refer: <http://www.rac-vic.org/> ; http://www.melbourne.indymedia.org/calendar/event_display_detail.php?event_id=3998&day=28&month=3&year=2007)

28 MARCH. SEMINAR – ‘HOW ADEQUATE IS THE PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION’S FRAMEWORK FOR OVERCOMING INDIGENOUS DISADVANTAGE?’ (ACT). Boyd Hunter, Fellow at the ANU Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research will examine recent evidence on Indigenous poverty and social exclusion and attempt to relate it to the Productivity Commission’s Framework for Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage. 12.30–2.00pm, CAEPR Seminar Room GO58, Ground Floor, Hanna Neumann Bldg #21, The Australian National University, Canberra. For further info contact (02)6125 0587 or admin.caepr@anu.edu.au (refer: <http://www.anu.edu.au/caepr/events07.php>)

29–30 MARCH. PROGRAM – ‘MISSION AND JUSTICE’ (SA). As part of the Loyola Institute’s ‘Faith Doing Justice Program’, Ms Sandie Cornish will run this program reflecting on Scripture, Church teaching, and key Jesuit documents, in order to deepen participants’ appreciation of the call to justice as an essential dimension of the mission of the Church, the Province, and of each Christian. The program will be run at Norwood Parish in Adelaide. For further details visit http://loyola.org.au/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=46 or call (02) 8918 4152

31 MARCH – 1 APRIL. SIXTH ANNUAL WEEKEND OF IDEAS (ACT). Manning Clark House is hosting a weekend event that will explore the principles, policies and practices underlying successive governments’ approaches to asylum seekers, refugees, detention and immigration. The theme is ‘A Fair Go for Refugees?’ Among numerous speakers are Mahmoud Baqiri, Julian Burnside QC, Prof. Frank Brennan, Dr Raimond Gaita, Sr Jane Keogh, Phil Glendenning, Frederika Steen. All welcome. Cost \$20 per day (\$10 MCH members) For more information contact (02) 6295 9433, manningclark@ozemail.com.au and visit: http://www.manningclark.org.au/events/diary_events.html

FEBRUARY NEWS MONITOR

Pax Christi welcomes British plan to withdraw Iraq troops

Pax Christi NSW joined its British counterpart in welcoming the news that the UK government is to withdraw at least 1,600 troops from Iraq in the next few months.

Manly parish in last ditch immigration appeal

Nearly 400 Mass-goers from Sydney's Mary Immaculate Manly parish signed a last-ditch appeal to the Government to prevent plans to deport a young Sierra Leone man whose sister was raped to punish him.

Cappo committee in call for SA mental health revamp

The South Australian government committed to implementing 33 recommendations from the Social Inclusion Board chaired by Adelaide's Msgr David Cappo which called for sweeping changes to the state's mental health care system.

Columban calls for Catholic stand on GM food

The use of new genetic engineering technologies in the production of food crops poses unknown health risks, Columban Fr Charles Rue said. He called for an informed Catholic voice on genetically modified foods in the lead up to the NSW election.

Christian activist accuses Govt over security bungle

Bryan Law, one of four members of a Christian peace group arrested in 2005 at the Pine Gap spy base, accused the Federal police of violating security laws after they provided the protesters with classified video footage of the arrest scene.

Church "behind the game" on energy: Bishop Toohey

Bishops Commission for Justice and Service chair, Bishop Chris Toohey, said that the Church is

"behind the game" in terms of energy use with many buildings old and energy wasteful.

Catholic media group calls for action on Pacific "crisis"

Concluding a Melbourne assembly, representatives of Catholic media outlets in the Pacific region have called on the media to play a "robust" role to help alleviate "the spiralling social, economic and political crisis that plague many of our nations".

Priest condemns re-opening of Aust mine in Philippines

The parish priest of St Florentina on Rapu Rapu island in the central Philippines condemned the re-opening of an Australian-owned mine on the island after the government lifted a 15-month suspension of operations owing to earlier tailing spills.

Caritas wants to hold leaders responsible for aid promises

Two leading international Catholic development networks were targeting the world's richest and powerful countries with a campaign to "make aid work" which aimed to ensure that international leaders meet promises to eliminate poverty in the world's poorest countries.

Act now on climate change: US bishops to Congress

It is time for the US to come together to address the moral, human and environmental dimensions of global climate change, the head of the US Catholic bishops' international policy committee said in a letter to American legislators.

Sudanese refugee cuts "abominable": Sydney bishop

Outgoing Sydney Vicar for Immigration, Bishop David Cremin, slammed a plan by new Immigration Minister Kevin Andrews to cut the intake of refugees from war-torn Sudan as "abominable".

Face truth about fossil fuels, Bishop Toohey says

Responding to a major UN report on climate change, Bishops' Commission for Justice and Service chair Bishop Chris Toohey said that it was time to face the "uncomfortable truth" about reforming the production and use of energy.

Death penalty violates Gospel, right to life: Vatican

Renewing its attack on the death penalty, the Holy See said that it is difficult to justify its use today and warns that the practice is an affront to human dignity and "the evangelical teaching of forgiveness."

Priest accuses NZ Govt over refugee double standard

Dominican priest, Fr Peter Murnane accused the New Zealand government of double standards after a Catholic Iranian man was denied asylum while an Iranian gay man facing similar threat of persecution was accepted as a refugee.

Uniya warns over low Australian engagement in Asia-Pacific

A new study by Uniya Jesuit Social Justice Centre found that there is still significant goodwill in the Asia-Pacific region towards Australia but the Centre's director Mary Bryant warned that the level of Australian involvement in the region remained "worryingly low".

Priest calls for "new partnership" in community services

Saying that not much has changed since Jesus first told the parable of the Good Samaritan, Catholic Social Services chairperson, Fr Joe Caddy, called for a new government, church and community partnership "to create a genuinely fairer and better world for all".

MARCH SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR

March is Landcare Month (Australia)

1 THU - International Death Penalty Abolition Day; International Treaty to Ban Landmines becomes effective in 1999; Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific Day
4 SUN - 2nd Sunday of Lent; Clean Up Australia Day
5 MON - International Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 1970; Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) commenced, 1990
8 THU - UN Day for Women's Rights and International Peace – International Women's Day
11 SUN - 3rd Sunday of Lent; Senior Citizens Week begins
16 FRI - Federal Parliament passed the ATSIC Amendment Bill, repealing provisions of the ATSIC Act and abolishing ATSIC, 2005
17 SAT - St Patrick (Solemnity)
18 SUN - 4th Sunday of Lent
19 MON - St Joseph, Husband of Mary (Solemnity)
20 TUE - World Day of Planetary Consciousness; US and allies invade Iraq, 2003
21 WED - International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; Week of Solidarity with the Peoples struggling against Racism and Racial Discrimination begins; National Harmony Day (Australia); World Poetry Day; World Forestry Day
22 THU - World Day for Water
23 FRI - World Meteorological Day
24 SAT - Assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero, 1980 ATSIC ceased operations, 2005
25 SUN - 5th Sunday of Lent; Death of Caroline Chisholm, 1877
26 MON - The Annunciation (Solemnity); 40th Anniversary of Populorum Progressio, Encyclical of Paul VI on the Development of Peoples

Notes on these dates are available in the printed ACSJC Social Justice Diary (cost \$6.60, to order go to http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/content/publications/social_justice_calendar.html, or cal 02 9956 5811)

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