

# Who Is My Neighbour?

## Australia's role as a global citizen

*The progressive development of peoples is an object of deep interest and concern to the Church. This is particularly true in the case of those peoples who are trying to escape the ravages of hunger, poverty, endemic disease and ignorance; of those who are seeking a larger share in the benefits of civilisation and a more active improvement of their human qualities; of those who are consciously striving for fuller growth.*

These words from Pope Paul VI's Encyclical *Populorum Progressio* (*On the Development of Peoples*), promulgated 40 years ago, are the starting point for the 2007 Social Justice Sunday Statement of the Australian Catholic Bishops. 'Who is my neighbour?' was the question the lawyer asked Jesus in Luke's Gospel; Jesus' answer was the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:29–37).

Australia and Australians have a responsibility to be good global citizens. This year's Social Justice Sunday Statement is a call for us Australians to act more in the interests of people who do not share our prosperity and security and to reconsider the way we live and act as individuals and as a nation.

Globalisation has made us more closely bound to other countries. Our consumer goods and services come more and more from other countries, often developing nations where wages and working conditions are far below those in Australia.

Globalisation is good news, but it is not all good news. It can offer employment and increased skills to developing nations, and efficiency to richer countries, but market forces alone will not ensure equitable and full development of peoples.

The 2007 Social Justice Sunday Statement focuses on five challenges that confront Australians as global citizens. They are:

- **Foreign aid and development assistance.** We can increase our aid budget to relieve poverty, develop infrastructure and train much-needed professionals from poorer countries.
- **Military alliances and interventions.** Our military alliances are important to our security, but any proposed military intervention requires our own thorough assessment of the morality of the war and broad international approval.
- **The United Nations and international financial institutions.** The UN needs reform, but the world would be a much poorer and less secure place without it. The UN and related global institutions should give weaker nations more influence over its activities.
- **Climate change and energy policy.** Human activity is contributing to climate change that could have profound effects on life on earth. Australia is uniquely positioned to promote alternatives in energy use that can reduce carbon emissions.
- **Border protection and refugees.** Australia accepts many people in need of humanitarian assistance, including refugees. However, we have harsh border protection policies, including the so-called 'Pacific solution'. Good global citizens should ensure protection for genuine refugees and humane treatment for all who come here.

The ACSJC website ([www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au](http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au)) will soon have the following resources available for download free of charge:

- Social Justice Sunday Liturgy Notes
- Teachers' Resources.

Other resources that are very useful in parishes and schools are the Social Justice Sunday Prayer Card and 'Ten Steps' leaflet. These can be ordered from the ACSJC Secretariat on (02) 9956 5811 or by email: [admin@acsjc.org.au](mailto:admin@acsjc.org.au).