

ACSJC Monthly Briefing April 2016 No 177



From the Secretariat April 2016

Dear friends,

This message is being written in the days after Easter, the greatest celebration in the Church's year. It marks the end of a great three-day ritual, in which we commemorate the terrible death that Jesus willingly experienced and then spend a day in quiet contemplation and expectation before the light-filled joy of Easter morning.

Each year the Pope issues a message of reflection and encouragement for the Easter season. It is a message *Urbi et Orbi* – to the city of Rome, of which he is Bishop, and to the world. You can read the whole of Pope Francis' Message on the Vatican [website](#).

This year, the Pope begins his message with these words:

'Jesus Christ, the incarnation of God's mercy, out of love for us, died on the cross, and out of love he rose again from the dead. That is why we proclaim today: Jesus is Lord!

'His resurrection fulfils the prophecy of the Psalm: God's mercy endures for ever; it never dies. We can trust him completely, and we thank him because for our sake he descended into the depths of the abyss.

'Before the spiritual and moral abysses of mankind, before the chasms that open up in hearts and provoke hatred and death, only an infinite mercy can bring us salvation ...

'The glorious Easter message, that Jesus, who was crucified is not here but risen (cf. Mt 28:5-6), offers us the comforting assurance that the abyss of death has been bridged and, with it, all mourning, lamentation and pain (cf. Rev 21:4).'

But, as His Holiness reminds us, the joy of Easter cannot make us forget the terror and violence that are such a vivid sign of our human brokenness:

'Our world is full of persons suffering in body and spirit, even as the daily news is full of stories of brutal crimes which often take place within homes, and large-scale armed conflicts which cause indescribable suffering to entire peoples.'

When he was writing this Message, Pope Francis could not know that on Easter Sunday in Lahore, Pakistan, a suicide bombing would leave at least 69 people dead and more than 300 injured. This attack was reportedly aimed at the Christian community, but the great majority of the victims were Muslim. Only a few days before the Message was issued, terrorist bombings in Belgium left 32 people dead and more than 300 injured. Pope Francis mentions many other places racked by fear, deprivation and injustice – in the Middle East, in Africa and in South America. He makes a special mention of 'beloved Syria, a country torn by a lengthy conflict, with its sad wake of destruction, death, contempt for humanitarian law and the breakdown of civil concord'.

From time to time Australia has experienced similar violence, though nothing on the scale that has been seen elsewhere. Pope Francis' message should, however, touch our conscience in one respect:

'The Easter message of the risen Christ ... invites us not to forget those men and women seeking a better future, an ever more numerous throng of migrants and refugees – including many children – fleeing from war, hunger, poverty and social injustice. All too often, these brothers and sisters of ours meet along the way with death or, in any event, rejection by those who could offer them welcome and assistance.'

We Australians have to ask ourselves what we are doing to offer welcome and assistance to such people. Sadly, we seem to be setting the worst example to the rest of the world: demonising instead of welcoming those 'fleeing from war, hunger, poverty and social injustice'. We seek a military response rather than a humane one, and on the world stage we offer few solutions other than rigid border control and the pursuit of people smugglers. Those people who have made it to Australia – including vulnerable children – are deported to languish without hope or any prospect of a constructive life.

Jesus wants something else for these people. And, as Pope Francis reminds us – these challenges are international, not just local. Australia and each one of us is called to global response of mercy and justice:

'May the forthcoming World Humanitarian Summit not fail to be centred on the human person and his or her dignity, and to come up with policies capable of assisting and protecting the victims of conflicts and other emergencies, especially those who are most vulnerable and all those persecuted for ethnic and religious reasons.'

Pope Francis' Message ends with 'the words of the Risen One: "See, I am making all things new ... To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life" (Rev 21:5-6).' In a world that Christ has made new, we are called as individuals and as citizens to seek a new way, one that embraces love and welcomes the stranger.

Inspired by the ever-new promise of Easter, let's work, as individuals and members of the global community, to build the Kingdom for which Christ died and rose again.

John Ferguson
National Executive Officer



Current Issues/Resources April 2016

2015–2016 SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT REPRINT

For those who have missed out or those who would like more, the Social Justice Statement *For Those Who've Come Across the Seas: Justice for refugees and asylum seekers* has been reprinted and is available to [order here](#).

CHANGE THE RECORD COALITION: BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE

The rates at which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are experiencing violence and being put in prison has reached a crisis point. In November 2015, the Change the Record Coalition launched a 'Blueprint for Change'. This is the first time a broad range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous organisations have come together with a concrete plan for Federal, State and Territory Governments to change the record on soaring Aboriginal imprisonment rates and high levels of

experienced violence. The Blueprint urges a whole of government strategy, the setting of justice targets, and a commitment to work in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, their organisations and representatives to drive solutions. To find out more, visit [here](#).

REPORT & PETITION: EDUCATION FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS

In December 2015, the Refugee Council of Australia released the [report](#) – *Barriers to Education for People Seeking Asylum and Refugees on Temporary Visas*. A large number of the 30,000 people who arrived here seeking safety and protection face insurmountable barriers in pursuing this dream. The Refugee Council is calling for these groups to have the same rights to access education as every other Australian. A petition to the Education Ministers of Federal and State and Territory Governments is calling for equal access to education support. Sign the petition [here](#).

REFUGEE COUNCIL ANALYSIS: Boat arrival recognition

For many years, Australian politicians and other public figures have debated whether or not asylum seekers reaching Australia by boat have serious claims for refugee protection or are merely ‘economic migrants’. To answer this question, the Refugee Council of Australia has analysed Australian Government statistics about visa outcomes for boat arrivals from 1976 to 30 June 2015 – and found that 81% of those who arrived by boat seeking asylum in Australia were found to be refugees. To find out more, visit [here](#).

SUBMISSION ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Human trafficking and slavery is a terrible consequence of economic and social exclusion, according to a submission from Australia’s Catholic bishops to a Senate inquiry. ‘Exclusion is the result of a number of factors,’ says Bishop Terry Brady, Chair of the Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life. ‘It is the result of not recognising the human dignity of each person, so people are treated as an object or a means to an end. It happens because people are in poverty and don’t have access to adequate education or employment. It is caused by putting money and not people at the centre of the economy.’ The Commission made the submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement last month. Access the submission [here](#).

AUSTRALIAN CHURCHES REFUGEE TASKFORCE: SANCTUARY FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS

Are you a Church or church group wanting to offer Sanctuary to Asylum Seekers? The granting of Sanctuary is a strong and pivotal act of civil disobedience on the part of the church. It derives from the ancient power of the church to give ‘Sanctuary’ and offer protection from the authorities to those most vulnerable who are in fear of their lives. The granting of Sanctuary was recognised by English law from the fourth to the seventeenth century to provide immunity to arrest. To register your interest visit [here](#)

ARTICLE: Deja vu for Timor as Turnbull neglects boundary talks

In this *Eureka Street* article, Fr Frank Brennan SJ calls for a new and just approach on the part of Australia to the Timor Sea. Rui Maria de Araujo, the prime minister of Timor-Leste, wrote to Malcolm Turnbull inviting him to turn a new leaf in the Australia-Timor relationship. It was not to be. But the Timorese are well used to winning the hearts and minds of Australians even when our political leaders appear to be tone deaf to their pleas. This time they have convinced the Labor Party about the justice of their cause, and there is every chance that the Australian community will rally behind them after the federal election. [Web](#).

PETITION: BE FAIR, AUSTRALIA – AGREE TO TIMOR SEA BORDER NOW!

Timor-Leste does not yet have permanent maritime boundaries with Australia. Timor-Leste seeks to settle its border with Australia in accordance with its rights under international law, so that the related resources of oil, gas, jobs and infrastructure can be distributed fairly. Timor-Leste wants to build a relationship with all of its neighbours including Australia, based on honesty, respect and equality, and by reaching a fair resolution to the border issue. East Timor's Prime Minister wrote to Malcolm Turnbull on 1 February 2016 asking for formal talks on a permanent boundary. The answer stands at 'No'. To find out more, visit [here](#).

RELIGION & ETHICS REPORT: WEST PAPUA: ANOTHER EAST TIMOR?

Human rights advocate Sr Susan Connelly has just returned from a fact finding mission to West Papua. She is one of the authors of *We Are in Danger*, a report on the situation there. It refers to allegations of torture and death at the hands of Indonesian police and military; and even an attempted 'slow motion genocide' of the indigenous population of West Papua, using mass migration from Java. She told ABC's Andrew West that her investigation in West Papua had a familiar and frightening echo. To hear the interview, visit [here](#).

REPORT: HUMAN RIGHTS IN WEST PAPUA 2015

In its latest report, the International Coalition for Papua brings together the research of 25 organisations and experts from inside and outside West Papua on the situation of human rights, indigenous peoples' rights and the conflict situation there. It details in particular the demographic development and its causes as well as the ongoing violence by security forces that targets indigenous Papuans. The development of the human rights situation in West Papua during 2013 and 2014 shows a deterioration compared to the period covered by the ICP's previous report. The two east Indonesian provinces of Papua and Papua Barat continues to be one of the regions of Asia most seriously affected by human rights violations and an unresolved long standing political conflict. To access the report, visit [here](#).

MERCY CARDS: RESOURCE PACK FOR CATHOLIC PARISHES

These cards offer prayers, scripture, discussion starters, reflective questions, song suggestions, a call to action. For parish meetings and groups, children's catechesis and home activities, school assemblies, classroom and staff. Centred on the Jubilee Year of Mercy focusing on a challenging statement from Pope Francis. Phone: 0412 850 883. Email: info@gpbs.com.au. [Web](#).

call for national redress for Victims of child abuse

A collective of leading organisations representing child abuse victims have come together to call on the Federal Government to show real leadership and announce its concrete commitment to a National Redress Scheme for survivors of institutional childhood sexual abuse. In a joint media statement representatives from Adults Surviving Child Abuse, Care Leavers Australasia Network, the Truth, Justice and Healing Council, the Australian Council of Social Service and People with Disability Australia Incorporated have called for immediate action from Australia's governments to deliver real justice and healing to Australian survivors of child sexual abuse. [Web](#),

CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES VICTORIA WELCOMES REPORT ON FAMILY VIOLENCE

Catholic Social Services Victoria has welcomed the Royal Commission's report, which recommends a whole of community, and bipartisan whole of government response. There are 227 specific recommendations, addressing the barriers to accessing services faced particularly by Aboriginal women, and those from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, focusing on perpetrators, so that

victims are not on their own in protecting themselves and their children, focusing on children, ‘the silent victims of family violence’, recognising the needs of women and children ‘stuck’ in crisis and short term housing to be immediately rehoused, and calling for greater resourcing of police and courts. The full report can be accessed [here](#). To find out more visit [here](#).

WORLD ELDER ABUSE DAY TOOLKIT

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) is on 15 June 2016. It is the main day in the year when the world voices its opposition to the abuse and suffering inflicted on older people, most often by their families. Seniors Rights Victoria has prepared a WEAAD 2016 Toolkit to help you mark the day. It contains lots of ideas, as well as marketing support and links to brandmarks, social media and web banners and merchandise such as posters, magnets, bookmarks and ribbons. To find out more about WEAAD, and to register your event or activity, please [click here](#). The toolkit can be downloaded [here](#).

PUBLICATION: How people solve legal problems: level of disadvantage and legal capability

This Law & Justice Foundation paper by Hugh M. McDonald and Zhigang Wei provides compelling new evidence demonstrating the lower legal capability of multiple disadvantaged people. The most disadvantaged respondents were found to be significantly more likely to take no action in response to their legal problems. In addition, when they did take action, they were significantly less likely to use self-help resources, and significantly more likely to use not-for-profit legal services, than those less disadvantaged. Implications for policy and effective legal assistance services are discussed. Download the paper [here](#).

REPORT: NO END IN SIGHT – SYDNEY AND MELBOURNE’S HOUSING AFFORDABILITY CRISIS

This report by Bob Birrell and David McCloskey documents the seriousness of the housing affordability crisis in Sydney and Melbourne and shows that the assumptions undergirding Commonwealth and State Government policies to deal with it are not working and cannot work. The urgency of a rethink on these policies was revealed during the debate in late February 2016 on the Labor opposition’s proposals to abolish negative gearing concessions on established residential property from 2017. The Prime Minister, declared, to a chorus from the property industry, that this would reduce the value of housing. The PM’s stance reveals a monumental insensitivity to the social catastrophe flowing from record high housing prices for the next generation. Download the report [here](#).

POSITION VACANT: CARITAS AUSTRALIA Head of Engagement and Sustainability.

Reporting to the Chief Executive Officer, the Head of Engagement and Sustainability (E&S) is a member of the executive Leadership Team and is responsible for delivering Caritas Australia’s (CA) Mission through driving CA’s Sustainability agenda, developing and widening CA’s Supporter and Donor base, and building continually on our relationships with the Catholic and wider Australian community.

Applications accepted by COB 11 April 2016. For the specifications of this position, the full position description and contact details, visit [here](#). Applications can be submitted to jobs@caritas.org.au.



ACSJC Publications April 2016

SERIES PAPER 78 – ‘PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST: PASTORAL LETTERS FOR THE FEAST OF ST JOSEPH THE WORKER 2010-2015.’

In the latest Catholic Social Justice Series, the ACSJC has brought together a collection of the Pastoral Letters written by Bishop Christopher Saunders, a long-serving Chairman of the ACSJC, who stood down from that position last year. *Putting People First: Pastoral Letters for the Feast of St Joseph the Worker 2010-2015*, provides an invaluable record of the significant issues relating to work and justice in that five-year period: the global financial crisis; the Northern Territory ‘intervention’ and the future of remote communities; the Insecure Work inquiry of the ACTU; and the public outcry at the inadequacy of allowances for the unemployed and sole parents. The letters include succinct and accurate summaries of the arguments with sufficient, reliable statistics. Professor Paul Smyth provides an extensive introduction to the series paper. [Link](#).

DISCUSSION GUIDE: 2016 WORLD DAY OF PEACE MESSAGE

The theme for the 49th World Day of Peace Message from Pope Francis is *Overcome Indifference and Win Peace*. Pope Francis’ message is a heartfelt plea to us all to engage with the world around us, not to turn our backs on suffering and injustice, and ‘not to lose hope in our human ability to conquer evil and to combat resignation and indifference’. He highlights the responsibilities we share, not simply as individuals but as a society. If we are to honour the spirit of this Jubilee of Mercy – and the presence of a God who cares about us and will not abandon us – we need to show genuine and practical concern for the most vulnerable among us. The ACSJC has prepared a Discussion Guide for the papal message, which is available on our [website](#).

ORDER NOW! – 2016 SOCIAL JUSTICE DIARY

The 2016 Social Justice Diary includes the dates of significant events, anniversaries and special days which celebrate particular aspects of social justice. The Diary 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: \$7.50 (including postage). To download an order form, [click here](#).

SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT 2015–2016: AVAILABLE AGAIN

This year’s Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Social Justice Statement is entitled ‘For Those Who’ve Come Across the Seas: Justice for refugees and asylum seekers’. Due to overwhelming demand the original print run sold out, but the document has been reprinted and is now available. We have also reprinted the ‘Ten Steps’ leaflet that accompanies the Statement.

PDF and Word versions of the Statement can be downloaded from the ACSJC website. On the ACSJC website you will also find a range of print and multimedia resources – available [here](#).

Prayer Cards and ‘Ten Steps’ leaflets can be ordered from the ACSJC on (02) 8306 3499 or by email: admin@acsjc.org.au

SERIES PAPER 77 – ‘BEAUTY AND OUR BIBLICAL CALLING TO PEACE, JUSTICE AND SUSTAINABILITY’

In this paper Professor McCormick explores the Biblical account of the Creation and its vision of a rich and bountiful world in which we are called to live as responsible and loving members of a community, caring for and cherishing our world and all that lives in it. He shows how the teaching and actions of Jesus bring this vision to its culmination to become our Christian mission. Available [here](#).

(Catholic Social Justice Series papers: \$7.50 a copy, including postage)



News Monitor April 2016

[Pope to wash asylum-seekers' feet for Holy Thursday](#)

24-Mar-2016

Pope Francis will wash the feet of 12 young asylum-seekers later today to highlight the need for the international community to provide shelter to refugees, reports

AFP/Seven News.

[Pope criticises authorities over indifference to refugees](#)

21-Mar-2016

Pope Francis has criticised those who he said were washing their hands of the fate of refugees, telling a large crowd at yesterday's Palm Sunday service that authorities have refused to take responsibility.

[ACBC says human trafficking the result of social exclusion](#)

18-Mar-2016

Human trafficking and slavery is a terrible consequence of economic and social exclusion, according to a submission from Australia's Catholic Bishops to a Senate inquiry.

[Pope urges governments to open doors to migrants](#)

17-Mar-2016

Pope Francis has criticised governments who close their doors to migrants in comments that came as the European Union seeks to shut the Balkan route into its territory, reports AFP on Seven News.

[Groups urge US to change policy after activist's murder](#)

15-Mar-2016

At least 25 Catholic groups have joined non-governmental organisations in condemning the murder of Honduran environmental activist Berta Cáceres, and called for a change in US policy toward assistance in the region.

[Josephite Sisters train to help asylum-seekers](#)

14-Mar-2016

The Sisters of St Joseph in North Sydney spent yesterday in a training session to prepare them to help harbour asylum-seekers the Turnbull government tries to force back to Nauru or Manus Island, reports *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

[Catholic report documents murder, torture in West Papua](#)

10-Mar-2016

A new Church report has documented allegations of recent military and police intimidation, beatings and torture, kidnapping and murder in West Papua, reports *The Catholic Leader*.

[Arrupe Place recognises strength of refugee women](#)

09-Mar-2016

The women at Arrupe Place in Sydney's west have fled their home countries for any number of reasons,

yet they remain resilient in the face of their displacement, writes Maeve Brown, Shelter Project Coordinator.

[Priest complains to PM over asylum-seeker treatment](#)

08-Mar-2016

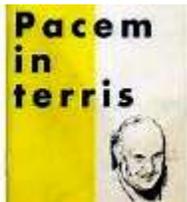
A senior Northern Territory priest who works closely with asylum-seekers in detention has called on the Prime Minister to end their incarceration, reports *The Catholic Leader*.

[Aboriginal elder, ex-priest, professor: Pat Dodson for Senate](#)

03-Mar-2016

Opposition Leader Bill Shorten has put forward "the father of reconciliation" and former priest Patrick Dodson as the replacement for outgoing West Australian senator Joe Bullock.

- courtesy cathnews.com



Social Justice Diary April 2016

April 2016

1	Fri	
2	Sat	World Autism Awareness Day
3	Sun	Second Sunday of Easter Divine Mercy Sunday READ MORE ↓
4	Mon	The Annunciation International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action - ACSJC resources on Peacebuilding
5	Tue	
6	Wed	International Day of Sport for Development and Peace - ACSJC resources on Sport
7	Thu	International Day of Reflection on the Genocide in Rwanda - ACSJC resources on Peacebuilding World Health Day

8	Fri	National Youth Week begins
9	Sat	
10	Sun	Third Sunday of Easter
11	Mon	1963 Pope John XXIII's encyclical Pacem in Terris ('Peace on Earth') READ MORE ↓
12	Tue	International Day of Human Space Flight
13	Wed	
14	Thu	
15	Fri	1991: Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Royal Commission Final Report signed - ACSJC resources on Justice for Indigenous People
16	Sat	
17	Sun	Fourth Sunday of Easter World Day of Prayer for Vocations 1816: Masssacre of Aboriginal people at Appin, NSW - ACSJC resources on Justice for Indigenous People READ MORE ↓
18	Mon	World Heritage Day
19	Tue	
20	Wed	
21	Thu	
22	Fri	International Mother Earth Day - ACSJC resources on the Environment
23	Sat	World Book and Copyright Day

24	Sun	Fifth Sunday of Easter 1945: First United Nations Conference opens with 45 nations attending
25	Mon	ANZAC Day - ACSJC resources on Peacebuilding
26	Tue	1986: Nuclear plant accident in Chernobyl, Ukraine, causing thousands of deaths and widespread contamination in Europe 1998: Bishop Gerardi murdered in Guatemala
27	Wed	
28	Thu	1841: Death of St Peter Chanel, first martyr from Oceania, in the New Hebrides
29	Fri	Day of Remembrance for all Victims of Chemical Warfare - ACSJC resources on Peacebuilding
30	Sat	International Jazz Day