

ACSJC Monthly Briefing May 2017 No 189



From the Secretariat May 2017

Dear friends,

There have been profound changes in Australia's labour market over the past three decades. The decline of full-time permanent work, increasing casualisation of jobs and the entrenched disadvantage of people who are excluded mean that the two issues of insecure employment and unemployment have been constant themes on each Feast Day of St Joseph the Worker.

Thirty years ago, Pope Saint John Paul II visited Australia, travelling extensively and speaking to all sections of our community. Of great relevance on this Feast Day (1st May) are the words he spoke to workers at the Transfield factory in the Diocese of Parramatta and to unemployed trainees at the Archdiocese of Hobart's Willson training centre.

The Pope praised the long and proud tradition of Australia's industrial relations system, which had for many years defended the rights of workers and ensured equity and solidarity, 'especially in difficult times'. He emphasised that industrial relations should be conducted in a spirit of understanding and cooperation, recognising that 'the worker is always more important than both profits and machines'.¹

He described the experience of unemployment as a 'human problem of vast dimensions' and warned of the evils of social and economic inequality. To those without work, the Holy Father stressed that 'their unemployed status is not a matter of personal failure' but rather a systemic failure that must be addressed through a reordering of the economy and particularly through the creation of new jobs.²

The Gospel of Work

Pope John Paul II's message to Australia was prophetic. The issues he raised concerning vulnerable and unemployed workers are as relevant now as when he visited. He drew from what he called the 'Gospel of Work' in his ground-breaking Encyclical, *Laborem Exercens* ('On Human Work').

The Gospel of Work looks to scripture, recognising the sacred and deeply human nature of work and standing against narrow materialistic valuations that would reduce the person to a mere factor of production or regard those who are unemployed as surplus to requirement and a burden on society.

There are three fundamental attributes of work that serve human dignity and maintain the common good.

- We are made in the image and likeness of God and are called to share in the great work of creation and to continue the work of the Creator.³ The dignity of work is not to be found in the kind of work being done, but in the fact that 'the one who is doing it is a person'.⁴
- Work is essential for personal development. The individual applies talents and develops skills, fashions resources and produces goods and services. The feeling of a job well done and a career developed is essential to the individual's self-fulfilment.⁵

- The world of work has a broader social context, for it unites people. Far from being isolated units in the production process, colleagues and friends share in the common enterprise of their workplace. They are parents providing for their families, they are neighbours contributing to their local communities and they are part of a generation adding to the efforts and dreams of previous ones.⁶

These key attributes are so essential to the health and justice of our society. The last three decades have shown that where decent work is unavailable, either through the lowering of wages and conditions or through persistent unemployment, the true meaning of work is undermined, and individuals, their families and communities suffer.

The anti-social trend of lower wages and conditions

Pope John Paul II emphasised that ‘a just wage is the concrete means of *verifying the justice* of the whole socioeconomic system and, in any case, of checking that it is functioning justly’.⁷ Over recent decades, low-paid and vulnerable workers have suffered significant losses in terms of lower wages and conditions and job insecurity.

The wage was always regarded as the primary means workers could provide for their families and stay out of poverty. Now, however, around eight per cent of full-time workers and up to 25 per cent of part-time workers experience poverty.⁸ Australia’s minimum wages are falling further behind average wages and household disposable income. The annual minimum wage reviews are failing to protect hundreds of thousands of low-paid and insecure workers and their families from poverty.⁹

The recent decision of the Fair Work Commission to cut back Sunday and public holiday penalty rates in the retail, hospitality and fast-food sectors is another blow for vulnerable workers. It will have a big impact on women, young people and immigrants, who have a higher level of participation in these sectors. Some could suffer reductions of \$10 an hour. Many will need to work additional irregular hours away from their families or suffer the loss.¹⁰

The social disaster of unemployment

If the low wages and poor conditions of vulnerable workers are judged as being anti-social according to the three key attributes of the Gospel of Work, then the lot of unemployed workers can be judged as ‘a real social disaster’.¹¹

Pope John Paul II spoke of unemployment as ‘*the privation of all the values that work represents and contributes to individuals, families and society*. Work is a right and a duty.’¹²

The cost of unemployment cannot be borne solely by unemployed workers and their families. Society has an obligation to provide unemployment benefits to meet the basic needs of these individuals and families, keeping them out of poverty. For many years now, the Newstart Allowance has been woefully inadequate, with around 70 per cent of recipients experiencing poverty and hardship, often for prolonged periods.¹³ The payment is poverty-inducing and actually undermines people’s capacity to seek work.

We face an unemployment crisis – one that is as much moral as it is economic. It is unacceptable that three-quarters of a million Australians are in need of work, while the market is offering only 185,000 vacancies.¹⁴ Australia has one of the toughest compliance and work test regimes for jobseekers. Allowance recipients are being pushed harder to find jobs that in many cases are just not there. The

indignity of unemployment is then compounded by being poorly assisted or hounded by a system that was intended to serve them. The current failures of Centrelink's automated debt recovery system have seen many recipients issued with false debt notices and intimidated by the threat of debt collectors and even prosecution.¹⁵

Against a rhetoric that casts people as 'dole-bludgers', 'job snobs' or as rorting the system, it is worth recalling again the words John Paul II spoke to trainees in Hobart:

All are encouraged to use their abilities to the full, and to realise that their unemployed status is not a matter of personal failure. Above all, *efforts must be made to create new jobs*.¹⁶

It is the system that has failed to ensure the availability of adequate employment.

The right and duty to work – our shared responsibility

There are immediate steps that can improve the lot of low-paid and unemployed workers. In the current Annual Wage Review, the Australian Catholic Council for Employment Relations is calling for the National Minimum Wage to be increased by \$37.30 per week and for Award rates of pay to be lifted by \$30.70 per week. And as Budget night approaches, the Australian Council of Social Service is calling for the basic rate of the Newstart Allowance to be increased by \$54 per week.

In addition to the immediate financial security of low-paid and unemployed workers, there needs to be a renewed commitment to protecting basic conditions of work, increasing investment in education and skills training, and to creating real jobs, particularly in areas and among groups for whom the market has failed to provide.

It is unfair that low-paid workers are carrying the cost of the purported creation of jobs through reduced wages and the loss of entitlements such as Sunday penalty rates. It is unjust that the unemployed are told constantly that they owe something to society in return for unemployment benefits when our economy fails to provide the real jobs they deserve. We must move beyond a situation where the poorest groups in our society carry economic burdens that the entire community should shoulder.

As St John Paul II said all those years ago:

Every partner in this common endeavour should act on the conviction that everyone has a *basic right* to work in order to have a fair share of the world's goods. It must be stressed that all the partners have a duty to work for solutions that respect the dignity of the individual and the common good of society.¹⁷

Notes

1. Pope John Paul II (1986), 'Address to Industrial Workers', in *The Pope in Australia: Collected Homilies and Talks*, St Paul Publications, pp.63–64.
2. Pope John Paul II (1986), 'Address on Unemployment', in *The Pope in Australia: Collected Homilies and Talks*, St Paul Publications, pp.102–104.
3. Pope John Paul II, (1981), *Laborem Exercens*, Encyclical Letter of Human Work, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, n.25.
4. *Ibid*, n.6.
5. *Ibid*, n.9.
6. *Ibid*, n.16.
7. *Ibid* n.19.

8. Australian Council of Social Service (2016), *Poverty in Australia 2016*, ACOSS & SPRC, p.13.
9. Australian Catholic Council for Employment Relations (2017), *Living Wage Claim and Submission*, Annual Wage review 2016–17, ACCER, pp.2, 9, 17.
10. Jim Stanford (2017), *A Transition to Nowhere: On the impossibility of avoiding the social costs of reduced penalty rates*, The Australia Institute, pp.1, 2; The Australia Institute (2017), *Women's Wages and the Penalty Rate Cut*, Fact Sheet, p.1.
11. Pope John Paul II (1981), n.18.
12. Pope John Paul II (1986), 'Address on Unemployment', p.100.
13. Australian Council of Social Service (2016), pp. 13, 28.
14. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2017), *Labour Force, Australia, Mar 2017*, 6202.0; Australian Bureau of Statistics (2017), *Job Vacancies, Australia, Feb 2017*, 6354.0.
15. Australian Council of Social Service (2017), *Design, scope, cost-benefit analysis, contracts awarded and implementation associated with the Better Management of the Social Welfare System initiative*, Submission to the Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs, pp.1, 3–4, 10.
16. Pope John Paul II (1986), 'Address on Unemployment', p.103.
17. Pope John Paul II (1986), 'Address to Industrial Workers', p.63.



Current Issues/Resources May 2017

KPMG REPORT: FINANCIAL STRESS IN AUSTRALIAN HOUSEHOLDS

KPMG has used data from the ABS Household Expenditure Survey and analysed confidentialised unit record data from the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey to review the incomes and spending patterns of Australian households. Ten to 15 per cent of households appear to be consistently unable to pay bills and debts as they fall due. Around five per cent are unable to afford heating and meals, need to pawn possessions or require assistance from welfare organisations. The bottom 20 per cent of households has recorded the highest rate of growth in investment income at 8.5 per cent per annum, reflecting greater exposure to risk such as through negatively geared property investment. To access the report, visit [here](#).

ANGLICARE REPORT: RENTAL AFFORDABILITY SNAPSHOT 2017

The eighth Rental Affordability Snapshot that the number of houses affordable for people on low incomes is so low that rental stress is unavoidable for most. It highlights the extent to which the private rental market has failed to provide access to affordable and appropriate shelter, let alone a home, for millions of Australians. There is a dire shortage of affordable rental houses, particularly the ten per cent of Australians reliant on government payments. Nationally, only six per cent of the 67,651 dwellings surveyed on the first weekend in April were suitable for any of the ten selected households in receipt of government benefits. This is down from seven per cent in 2016. To access the report, visit [here](#).

AUSTRALIA INSTITUTE ANALYSIS OF CUTS TO SUNDAY PENALTY RATES

The Australia Institute has produced two papers discussing the Fair Work Commission's ruling to cut penalty rates for Sunday and holiday work in the retail and hospitality sectors. The [first paper](#) ('Women's Wages and the Penalty Rate Cut') shows how women working in these sectors will be affected particularly badly. The paper says most retail and hospitality workers are women, who already receive

lower rates of pay and are more likely to be working part-time than men. The [second paper](#) ('A "Transition" to Nowhere: On the Impossibility of Avoiding the Social Costs of Reduced Penalty Rates') analyses proposals to phase in the recent cuts to penalty rates and concludes that 'plans for a more gradual implementation of these measures at best can only defer the inevitable economic and social hardship'.

'CLOSE THE GAP' PROGRESS AND PRIORITIES REPORT

Pat Turner and Jackie Huggins, Co-chairs of the Close the Gap Campaign, have launched their 2017 Progress and Priorities Report. The report raises concerns that the targets set by the Council of Australian Governments are not being met. It urges governments to commit to closing the health gap by implementing co-ordinated partnerships with the Commonwealth. It also calls on governments to take account of the social and cultural determinants of health, and asks the Federal Government to initiate a national inquiry into racism in hospitals and other health care settings to identify and counter racism's impact on health care. To access the report, visit [here](#).

SEEKING CLIMATE CHAMPIONS

From now until June, many faith-based organisations including Caritas Australia and Micah Australia are coordinating a huge campaign for climate justice: a petition run simultaneously in every electorate in Australia, calling on each MP and on our Parliament to support stronger climate action. Help create a powerful collective voice for climate justice that our political representatives cannot ignore! [Find out how you can take part](#).

PACIFIC CALLING PARTNERSHIP: 'CLIMATE CHANGE ISN'T A JOKE'

You are invited to take part in a campaign towards a Congregational voice on climate change and the Pacific Islands. For Facebook: Create a poster (hand written or typed) with the wording 'Climate change isn't a joke. We need climate action now'; Take a photo of yourself or others holding the poster; Send the photo to info@pacificclimatewatch.com.au; It will be posted on the Pacific Climate Watch Facebook page and website. If you would like to send a video: Create a 30-100 second video; Send it to info@pacificclimatewatch.com.au; It will be posted on the Pacific Climate Watch Facebook page and website. To find out more, visit the [website](#).

PETITION: FINALISE A FAIR AND PERMANENT BORDER WITH EAST TIMOR

A number of individuals and organisations, including Sr Susan Connelly SOSJ and the Timor Sea Justice Campaign, are organising petitions for the Australian government to negotiate on fair terms with the government of Timor-Leste to draw a fair and permanent border, based on the median line, which would allow both nations to claim what is rightfully theirs under international law. This would strengthen security and give certainty regarding investment, and would uphold the rights of nations to a defined and internationally accepted sovereignty. You can sign an online petition on the Timor Sea Justice Campaign [website](#) or download the formal paper Petition to the House of Representatives ([available here](#)) and get it signed by those in your networks.

BOOKLET: 'TEN THINGS EVERYONE NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT ISLAM'

Written by distinguished international scholar Professor John Esposito, and produced by Columban Missionaries, and this 36-page booklet provides basic information about Islam and enables a better understanding of the beliefs and practices of Muslims. It is beautifully illustrated and answers the most commonly-asked questions about Islam. It dispels the stereotypes and misrepresentation that too often

prevail in the secular press. Suitable for schools, parishes, homes and offices. Cost: \$8.80 (Incl. GST & Postage). To order, visit [here](#).

TJHC SUBMISSION TO PUBLIC HEARING OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION

The Church's Truth Justice and Healing Council recently made a submission to Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The submission is wide ranging and deals with issues including current Church child protection policies, safety standards and responses to allegations of child sexual abuse. The submission also looks at factors that may have contributed to child sexual abuse in the Church, including compulsory celibacy, clericalism, inadequate training and formation, denial and secrecy and the Church's culture. The submission can be downloaded [here](#).

UPCOMING CONFERENCE – 'CAST INTO THE DEEP'

The Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office is convening a National Conference on Pastoral Care in a Multicultural Church and Society from 19–20 July at the Melbourne campus of the Australian Catholic University. Keynote speakers include Cardinal Peter Turkson, Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development within the Roman Curia, and Cardinal Orlando Quevedo from the Philippines. To find out more, visit the [ACMRO website](#). Early bird registrations are now open until April 20 and can be made [here](#).

REFUGEE COUNCIL AND TASKFORCE CALL FOR MANUS CLOSURE

The Refugee Council of Australia has responded to reports that on Good Friday PNG Navy officers and locals had fired shots and thrown stones at the people detained in the Manus Island detention centre. According to reports, the shooting continued for several minutes, badly injuring at least one person. The Refugee Council says: 'Friday's events are another stark reminder of the Australian government's failure to protect the hundreds of people that they have imprisoned in offshore detention'. The Council is organising an online petition calling for those detained on Manus Island and Nauru to be brought to safety. The petition is available [here](#).

The Australian Churches' Refugee Taskforce has also condemned the violence that erupted on Manus Island on Good Friday, and has called for the camp to be evacuated, 'Melbourne Catholic' reports. The taskforce, which includes Catholic representatives, has worked collaboratively with other agencies across Australia for four years to call for the closure of offshore detention. It called on the federal government 'to act with compassion, to lift the veil of re-traumatisation and fear for refugees and asylum seekers, and to evacuate the camps on Manus and Nauru'. The full report is available [here](#).

CATHOLIC ALLIANCE FOR PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM

Fundraising

The Catholic Alliance for People Seeking Asylum (CAPSA) is a national initiative to influence hearts and minds in the Catholic community towards a more just, compassionate and humane welcome of people seeking asylum. CAPSA recognises that our current Australian government policy towards people seeking safety on our shores is in stark contrast to the core Gospel-teachings and recent messages of Pope Francis. The group envisages a community that values the fair and humane treatment of people seeking asylum and for a society where our government welcomes and supports people seeking asylum into our community. CAPSA is currently seeking donations to help expand their work across Australia. Your donation will help us run events in schools, facilitate meetings with politicians, create useful resources and videos, and run workshops with community members. All donations to CAPSA are tax

deductable through Jesuit Social Services. To help continue this important work, please donate via [this website](#).

Toolkit

CAPSA has produced a toolkit to help people get involved in their local communities – host a conversation, meet their MPs, or stage a Circle of Silence. CAPSA says: ‘This toolkit is designed to provide the tools and inspiration to transform our communities to become active and welcoming towards refugees’. The toolkit is available [here](#).

Campaign: ‘Fair go for families’

CAPSA is also joining with a range of other groups to call for greater access to family reunion for people who have had their claims for refugee status confirmed and are living in the Australian community. Families are an integral part of our communities and help people thrive in their new homes. CAPSA asks people to sign a pledge to show their support for refugee families and their right to be with their families. The full campaign and pledge for a ‘fair go for families’ are available [here](#).

CARITAS AUSTRALIA: CHALLENGE POVERTY BY ‘TREKKING IN SOLIDARITY’ IN NEPAL

Imagine trekking across Nepal’s majestic Annapurna mountain range, taking in some of the world’s most breathtaking landscapes, while raising money for the global poor. Registrations are now open for Caritas Australia’s ‘Trekking in Solidarity’ fundraising adventure, which will be held over 13 days in November 2017. Caritas Australia has worked in Nepal for decades. As one of the poorest and least developed countries in South Asia, approximately one in four Nepalese live on less than \$1.25 day. Following the earthquakes in Nepal in 2015, Caritas Australia delivered emergency aid to almost 352,000 (more than 70,000 households). Today Caritas is still working closely with those most marginalised across the country as they continue to rebuild their lives. Caritas’ Head of Engagement and Sustainability, David Armstrong, said for those who take part, it will likely be a physical, mental and spiritual challenge that will raise money for a great cause. For more information visit the [Caritas Australia website](#).

CLOSING DATE TO APPLY FOR CONSULTATIVE STATUS WITH THE UNITED NATIONS

Some non-governmental organisations are able to apply for consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC). Organisations that are accredited with ECOSOC can participate in a number of events, including regular sessions of ECOSOC, its commissions and its other subsidiary bodies. NGOs may attend official meetings, submit written statements prior to sessions, make oral statements, meet official government delegations and other NGO representatives, organise and attend parallel events that take place during the session, and participate in debates, interactive dialogues, panel discussions and informal meetings. Organisations have to demonstrate that their programme of work has direct relevance to the aims and purposes of the United Nations, and meet a number of other criteria. Organisations interested in applying for consultative status should submit their application and required documents on or before 1 June 2017. Information on who is eligible and how to apply is available [here](#).



ACSJC Publications May 2017

STILL TAKING ORDERS – 2017 SOCIAL JUSTICE DIARY

The 2017 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 resource 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](#).

DISCUSSION GUIDE: WORLD DAY OF PEACE MESSAGE 2017

The Australian Catholic Social Justice Council has issued a discussion guide for the annual Message for the World Day of Peace from Pope Francis. The theme of this year's Message is *Nonviolence: A Style of Politics for Peace*. In it Pope Francis confronts the global violence that amounts to 'a horrifying world war fought piecemeal'. He holds up the example of Jesus himself, who walked the path of nonviolence 'to the very end, to the cross, whereby he became our peace and put an end to hostility'. The Pope also reminds us of the many triumphs of nonviolent activism, including St Teresa of Calcutta and St John Paul II's heroic involvement in the downfall of European Communist regimes. The discussion guide is available in print and online [click here](#).

SERIES PAPER 79 – 'HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SLAVERY: A RESPONSE FROM AUSTRALIAN CATHOLICS'

This paper is written by Christine Carolan, Executive Officer of Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH) and Sr Noelene Simmons SM, NSW Regional Co-ordinator for ACRATH. It describes the forms that slavery and related crimes take in the modern world, the Church's teaching on and response to slavery and other forms of exploitation, and the international and Australian laws that deal with slavery. It also describes the work of organisations committed to combating slavery and helping its victims – in particular, ACRATH's efforts to educate Australians, to advocate on behalf of victims, and to work with similar organisations here and overseas to shut down human trafficking and help its victims. The paper discusses particular problems faced by those who experience trafficking and exploitation, including people who may be subject to forced marriage. It also gives suggestions for people interested in supporting the work of ACRATH and similar organisations. [Click here](#).

SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT 2016–2017

This year's Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Social Justice Statement is entitled 'A Place at the Table: Social justice in an ageing society'. PDF and Word versions of the Statement as well as a range of print and multimedia resources [available here](#).

BUILDING BRIDGES

The book, *Building Bridges: Social Justice Statements from Australia's Bishops 1988 to 2013*, brings the Statements together in an attractive and readable format. The publication is fully indexed, making this an exceptional resource for education and research. It offers an invaluable insight into Catholic social teaching brought to life in an Australian context over the past 26 years. This collection is a vital resource for anyone interested in the Church's teaching on justice. It is of special interest to schools and universities and to parish and diocesan groups.

Building Bridges is available from the ACSJC for \$35.00 per copy including postage anywhere in Australia. Order forms are [available here](#).

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



News Monitor May 2017

[Bishop bonds with fellow refugees](#)

20-Apr-2017

Parramatta Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv. has met with a Syrian family who escaped their war-ravaged homeland and resettled in western Sydney, Catholic Outlook reports.

[University apologises for its role in slavery](#)

20-Apr-2017

The leader of the Catholic religious order that helped found Georgetown University in Washington DC addressed more than 100 descendants of slaves and sought their forgiveness for its role in slavery, RNS reports.

[Youth justice system heads for 'perfect storm'](#)

20-Apr-2017

A social services agency head told the Victorian government's inquiry into youth justice centres yesterday that detention should be a last resort for young offenders, Melbourne Catholic reports.

[Funding boost for mental health services](#)

19-Apr-2017

An expansion of mental health support for people in the criminal justice system will ultimately help to create safer communities, according to Jesuit Social Services.

[Taskforce calls for Manus closure](#)

19-Apr-2017

The Australian Churches' Refugee Taskforce has condemned the violence that erupted on Manus Island on Good Friday, and has called for the camp to be evacuated, Melbourne Catholic reports.

[Mercy Sister makes a difference in Kenyan slums](#)

19-Apr-2017

A Perth-born Sister of Mercy is working to provide education, healthcare and welfare to people living in the slums of Nairobi, the eRecord reports.
more

[Homeless numbers on the rise](#)

18-Apr-2017

Nearly 10 years after then-prime minister Kevin Rudd declared "something needs to be done" about homelessness, the situation is worse than ever, the Sydney Morning Herald reports.

[Strengthening links with indigenous community](#)

13-Apr-2017

Brisbane Archbishop Mark Coleridge has welcomed a move to build stronger parish links with the indigenous community by adopting a new Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), The Catholic Leader reports.

[Happy ending to Stolen Generations story](#)

12-Apr-2017

A member of the Stolen Generation taking part in Caritas' Project Compassion campaign reconnected with one of his sisters on a recent visit to the Maitland Newcastle Diocese. Richard and Louise Campbell told their story to Aurora.

[Pope's Laundry opens for Rome's homeless](#)

11-Apr-2017

The Pope Francis Laundry service opened in Rome yesterday, giving the city's poor and homeless people the chance to wash and dry their clothes and blankets for free, reports Vatican Insider.

[Program aims to boost women's confidence](#)

11-Apr-2017

A new mentoring program aimed at helping to build the skills and faith of women in the Church is set to be launched next month, reports the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Media Blog.

['Resist the politics of cruelty'](#)

11-Apr-2017

Pro-refugee marches were held across Australia on Palm Sunday calling for justice for asylum-seekers and the end of mandatory detention, reports The Canberra Times.
more

[Sending kids to adult jail 'makes problem worse'](#)

10-Apr-2017

"Adult prison is no place for kids," according to a new video campaign released last week, Melbourne Catholic reports.

[Fair Work Commission rejects minimum wage target](#)

10-Apr-2017

The Fair Work Commission has rejected an application from unions and two Catholic organisations for a medium-term target to be set for the national minimum wage, reports the Sydney Morning Herald.

[Call to broaden focus on slavery-free goods](#)

04-Apr-2017

As more Australians choose to buy slavery-free Easter eggs this year, shoppers and the federal government are being urged to shine a light on the supply chain of other goods, reports The Good Oil.

[Bishops speak out for persecuted people](#)

31-Mar-2017

Christians are the most persecuted religious group in the world, Australia's Catholic bishops have told a parliamentary inquiry, reports the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Media Blog.

[Faith helps Sr Noelene in fight against slavery](#)

31-Mar-2017

Sr Noelene Simmons SM knows her commitment to work for the elimination of human trafficking is a long-term one; fortunately she is blessed with faith and hope, reports Catholic Outlook.

[Leaders urge Trump to protect environment](#)

31-Mar-2017

Catholic leaders are calling on the Trump administration to reconsider rollbacks of environmental protections, warning that time may be running out to protect the planet from pollution, America Magazine reports.

- courtesy cathnews.com



Social Justice Diary May 2017

May 2017

1	Mon	<p>St Joseph the Worker</p> <p><i>International Workers Day</i></p> <p>1991: Pope John Paul II's encyclical Centesimus Annus ('The Hundredth Year') - ACSJC PDF Discussion Guide</p>
2	Tue	
3	Wed	World Press Freedom Day
4	Thu	Yom ha-Shoah , Holocaust Memorial Day
5	Fri	Blessed Edmund Rice
6	Sat	<p>25th anniversary of the introduction of mandatory detention of asylum seekers in Australia (1992) - ACSJC resources on Refugees</p> <p>Fair Trade Fortnight begins</p>
7	Sun	<p>Fourth Sunday of Easter</p> <p>World Day of Prayer for Vocations</p>

		<u>World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day</u> READ MORE ↓
8	Mon	1945: <u>End of World War II in Europe</u> 1970: <u>First anti-Vietnam War Moratorium march in Australia</u>
9	Tue	
10	Wed	1994: <u>Nelson Mandela’s Inaugural Address as President of South Africa</u>
11	Thu	
12	Fri	
13	Sat	<u>World Fair Trade Day</u> READ MORE ↓
14	Sun	Fifth Sunday of Easter Mother’s Day 1971: Pope Paul VI’s Apostolic Letter <u>Octogesima Adveniens</u> (‘A Call to Action’) - <u>ACSJC PDF Discussion Guide</u>
15	Mon	<u>International Day of Families</u> 1891: Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical <u>Rerum Novarum</u> (‘On Capital and Labour’) - <u>ACSJC PDF Discussion Guide</u> 1931: Pope Pius XI’s encyclical <u>Quadragesimo Anno</u> (‘On Reconstruction and the Social Order’) - <u>ACSJC PDF Discussion Guide</u> 1961: Pope John XXIII’s encyclical <u>Mater et Magistra</u> (‘On Christianity and Social Progress’) - <u>ACSJC PDF Discussion Guide</u>
16	Tue	<i>World Debt Day</i> - ACSJC Resources on <u>World Poverty</u>
17	Wed	<u>World Telecommunications and Information Society Day</u> 2005: <u>Death of Fr Ted Kennedy</u>

18	Thu	<u>World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development</u>
19	Fri	
20	Sat	2002: <u>Timor-Leste Constitution comes into force with Xanana Gusmao as first President</u>
21	Sun	Sixth Sunday of Easter <u>Jubilee Sunday</u> <u>World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development</u>
22	Mon	<u>International Day for Biological Diversity</u> - ACSJC resources on the <u>Environment</u>
23	Tue	<u>International Day to End Obstetric Fistula</u>
24	Wed	Mary Help of Christians, Patron of Australia 1948: <u>Foundation of World Council of Churches</u>
25	Thu	<u>Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories commences</u>
26	Fri	<u>National Sorry Day</u> - ACSJC resources on <u>Justice for Indigenous People</u> 1997: <u>Tabling of Bringing Them Home Report in Parliament</u>
27	Sat	<u>National Reconciliation Week begins</u> - ACSJC resources on <u>Justice for Indigenous People</u> <u>50th anniversary of referendum that changed articles in the Australian Constitution that discriminated against Indigenous People (1967)</u> READ MORE ↓ Ramadan begins
28	Sun	The Ascension <u>World Communications Day. Theme: 'Fear not, for I am with you: communicating hope and trust in our time.'</u> <u>Week of Prayer for Christian Unity commences</u>
29	Mon	<u>International Day of UN Peacekeepers</u>

		25th anniversary of launch of Torres Strait Islander flag (1992)
30	Tue	
31	Wed	World No Tobacco Day