

ACSJC Monthly Briefing May 2018 No 200



From the Secretariat May 2018

Dear Friends

Below is the text of a Pastoral Letter issued to mark the Feast of St Joseph the Worker (1st May), which I invite you to circulate in your parish and local communities. The formatted letter can be downloaded.

A Fair Day's Pay – for the dignity of workers and the good of all

On this Feast of Saint Joseph the Worker, let us consider the importance of the just wage. This is particularly important in today's Australia, where wage growth has been very slow and low-paid workers often experience real hardship.

The Church has stressed the fundamental importance of fair remuneration for work. A just wage will meet the immediate needs of workers and their families and also allow them to save for the future. It ensures the prosperity of a society is shared adequately and that the social, economic and cultural life of the community is allowed to flourish. Workers cannot be valued only by their cost or treated simply as a factor of production.

This call for a just wage has been consistent. In the face of the 1890s recession, Pope Leo XIII defended the right of industrially weak workers to wages that would meet family needs and condemned any bargain that undermined this entitlement.¹ As the world fell into the Great Depression, Pope Pius XI urged greater collaboration between employers and employees to prevent dramatic reductions or increases in wages in order to maximise the number of jobs providing a suitable means of livelihood.² In the 1980s, when developed nations were opening their economies to global competition and restructuring industries and jobs, Pope John Paul II held up the just wage as a fundamental benchmark of fairness.

[W]ages ... are still the *practical means* whereby the vast majority of people can have access to those goods which are intended for common use ... Hence, in every case, 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.³

His successors, Popes Benedict XVI and Francis, have made that same assessment following the latest financial crisis. Both have raised concerns about vulnerable and unemployed workers losing protections and support for the sake of economic competitiveness, particularly where the logic of trickle-down economics has failed to ensure human development and social inclusion for all.⁴

A wage crisis in Australia

Here in Australia, the notion of a fair day's pay was championed for a good part of last century through institutions of industrial arbitration, wage setting and defence of vulnerable workers. This, together with the provision of income support for unemployed workers, made up a social safety net that protected the most vulnerable members of society. Over the past thirty years, however, there have been major changes in the world of work, including globalisation, the deregulation of the labour market,

casualisation of jobs and the changing composition of the workforce. Together, these have placed competitive pressures on wages.

Currently we are facing a wage crisis. Since 2012, wages growth has slumped to record lows, with increases of only two per cent each year – well below previous levels of 3.5 per cent. This stagnation is affecting all states and territories, all industries and all categories of job.⁵

Why is this happening? Where unemployment is low, it usually means that employers offer higher wages to attract and hold on to staff. We have seen exceptionally strong jobs growth over the past year, and unemployment is at just 5.6 per cent. Why, then, do these developments not translate to higher wages?

There is evidence that the unemployment rate is no longer an adequate measure of surplus labour. A truer measure would take account of all those *underemployed* workers who want more work. An underutilisation rate of 14 per cent gives a better picture of the competition for work.⁶

Furthermore, workers' bargaining power has been eroded. With household debt double disposable incomes, many workers are reluctant to upset their job security by pushing for a wage increase. The threat of jobs being automated and competition from overseas markets increases the job insecurity already felt by workers. Trade union membership has fallen to less than 15 per cent and tight restrictions on industrial action, particularly during wage negotiations, further reduces the collective power of workers. Vulnerable workers are less protected in casual jobs and a burgeoning 'gig economy'.⁷

These are the kind of structural issues holding back significant wage increases now and for the foreseeable future.

A challenge for all of us

This poses challenges not just for workers and their families, but for the strength of the economy and the health of our society.

Rising costs of living are becoming a real concern for ordinary Australians. Although consumer prices have remained low, the real value of wages is only just keeping up with the cost of living. Some find themselves falling behind as the price of some goods and services, including childcare, electricity, gas, health and education, have increased three to five times higher than the average.⁸ There is a general feeling that it is harder to balance the household budget.

While this is a challenge for most families, there are some who struggle in poverty, finding it virtually impossible to make ends meet: the 'working poor' and those unemployed workers who subsist on meagre income support. It has been estimated that over 1.5 million workers and almost 2 million people who are unemployed or who have withdrawn from the labour market are in poverty or at risk of it.⁹

Low-paid workers and their families who rely on the National Minimum Wage and award safety net are falling into poverty. The recent cuts to penalty rates of workers in the retail, hospitality and fast-food industries gives but one indication of the precarious circumstances of the low-paid. And 650,000 people on the Newstart Allowance are trying to survive, many on just \$40 a day. Around 70 per cent have been stuck on the Allowance for more than a year and more than half are in poverty. Newstart has not been increased in real terms since 1994.¹⁰

How to address the challenge

The Commonwealth Government is currently seeking to reduce corporate tax rates from 30 to 25 per cent to increase investment and, among other things, lift wages growth back to the levels enjoyed before they stagnated. These cuts are estimated to cost \$65 billion over ten years, and there is worry that spending would be cut in other important areas to meet the shortfall in revenue. Many doubt that the benefits would flow to significant wage increases, with indications corporations would give preference to shareholder returns and capital investment before wage increases and jobs.¹¹ This would be unfair when taking into account the fact that company profits have far outpaced wages growth for almost two decades.¹²

Others have suggested that substantial increases in education and training are the solution to wages stagnation, as the resulting boost in productivity will increase workers' bargaining power. While education and training are vital over the long term, our first priority must be the crisis of poverty experienced by low-paid and unemployed workers. We must repair the social safety net of wages and income support.

Around 20 per cent of employees are on awards and the pay of a further 10 to 15 per cent of workers is influenced by the wage decisions of the Fair Work Commission.¹³ In its interventions in the Annual Wage Review, the Australian Catholic Council for Employment Relations has consistently called for substantial increases to the minimum wage and award rates for low-paid workers. Similarly, Catholic Social Services Australia and the community sector are calling for an increase in Allowance payments to protect unemployed workers and increase their capacity for work.

Time for a new consensus

Beyond an improved social safety net of minimum wages and income support, what more could be done to reawaken Australia's commitment to a just wage? In a world of work so often characterised by antagonisms and competing claims, can we find a meeting place where government, workers and business can come together to work for the good of the whole community?

It has been done before. In the 1980s, business, unions and government agreed on the Prices and Incomes Accords, which limited wage demands, reduced industrial action and lifted the profitability of businesses. Social wage entitlements like Medicare and superannuation benefited workers and the broader community. However imperfect the Accords, they did show the possibility of competing parties coming together to strike a balance between wages and profits. Then, business profits needed to be restored; today it is workers' wages.

Building an economy that is inclusive and serves all is a key challenge of our times. The impasse of wage stagnation will be harder to solve without the cooperation of all parties working for the common good. The common good will never be served unless we ensure the greatest support to those most in need.

Ultimately, the just wage is the means of verifying the justice of the whole socioeconomic system.

Most Rev. Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFMConv STL DD
Bishop of Parramatta
Chairman, Australian Catholic Social Justice Council

Notes

1 Pope Leo XIII (1891), *Rerum Novarum*, On Capital and Labour, nn. 20, 45.

- 2 Pope Pius XI (1931), *Quadragesimo Anno*, On Reconstruction of the Social Order, nn. 63–75.
- 3 Pope John Paul II (1981), *Laborem Exercens*, On Human Work, n. 19.
- 4 Pope Francis (2015), *Laudato Si'*, On Care for Our Common Home, n. 109; (2013), *Evangelii Gaudium*, On the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World, nn. 54, 202; Pope Benedict XVI (2009), *Caritas in Veritate*, On Integral Human Development in Charity and Truth, nn. 25, 32.
- 5 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2018), *Wages Price Index, Australia, Dec 2017*, 6345.0; Chris Angus (2017), *Slow wage growth*, e-brief, NSW Parliamentary Research Service, NSW Parliament, pp. 4–6; The Treasury (2017), *Analysis of wage growth – November 2017*, Commonwealth of Australia, pp. 4–7.
- 6 The Treasury (2017), pp. 19–20.
- 7 Jim Stanford (2018), *Historical Data on the Decline in Australian Industrial Disputes*, Briefing Note, Centre for Future Work, The Australia Institute; James Bishop & Natasha Cassidy (2017), 'Insights into Low Wage Growth in Australia', *Bulletin*, March Quarter 2017; Bernard Keane (2017), 'Why is wages growth so low? Experts can't seem to agree', *Crikey*, 14 November 2017; Sergio Dionisio (2017), 'Why real wages are falling and the RBA doesn't know what to do', *Australian Financial Review*, 28 November 2017.
- 8 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2018), *Consumer Price Index, Australia, Dec 2017*, 6401.0; Australian Council of Social Service (2018), *Budget Priorities Statement: Federal Budget 2018–19*, p. 18.
- 9 According to an international measure of 60 per cent of median income. Australian Council of Social Service (2018), *Minimum wage submission 2018*, p. 32.
- 10 Australian Catholic Council for Employment Relations (2018), *Annual Wage Review – Living Wage Claim and Submission*, pp. 20–24, 27–29; ACOSS (2018), *Raise the Rate: Increase Newstart and related payments*, March 2018.
- 11 ACOSS (2018), *We cannot afford unfunded company tax cuts*, Briefing note; Laura Tingle & Phillip Coorey (2018), 'Secret BCA survey does not back tax cuts going to jobs, wage rises', *Australian Financial Review*, 26 March 2018.
- 12 Chris Angus (2017), pp. 10–11, 17; Australian Bureau of Statistics (2017), *Business Indicators, Australia, Mar 2017*, 5676.0; Saul Eslake (2017), 'Is faster profit growth essential for a pick-up in wages growth?', *The Conversation*, 4 October 2017.
- 13 James Bishop & Natasha Cassidy (2017).



Current Issues/Resources May 2018

POPE FRANCIS' APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION 'GAUDETE ET EXSULTATE'

In a new apostolic exhortation 'Gaudete et Exsultate' – 'Rejoice and be Glad' – Pope Francis calls on Catholics to follow Jesus' beatitudes through serving the marginalised, the poor and migrants, while offering an unequivocal defence of the child in the womb. The document is available [here](#).

SYDNEY PEACE PRIZE AWARD TO PROFESSOR JOSEPH STIGLITZ

Professor Joseph Stiglitz, American economist, Nobel laureate and lifelong champion for global economic justice, has been awarded the 2018 Sydney Peace Prize. Professor Stiglitz is a former senior vice president and chief economist of the World Bank and is a former member and chairman of the US president's Council of Economic Advisers. He has also been a member of the Pontifical Academy for

Social Sciences. The award will take place on Thursday 15 November at Sydney Town Hall. More information is available [here](#).

EVERYBODY'S HOME CAMPAIGN

Australia's housing system is broken. From people wanting to buy their very first house, to others struggling to just find a safe roof over their heads, it's clear that the system just isn't working for everyone. Crazy house prices and a system focused on property investment is locking a generation out of home ownership and creating more renters. Growing competition for rental properties are causing rents to skyrocket, so everyday workers can no longer afford to rent ordinary homes and don't have the security they need. The demand for affordable or social rental properties is outstripping supply and a chronic shortage of social and affordable housing is forcing record levels of homelessness. The campaign provides an opportunity to work together to call on our government to bring balance back to the system. To find out more and join the campaign for a better, fairer housing system, visit [here](#).

2016 CENSUS OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: HOMELESSNESS

Census figures reveal a rise in the rate of homelessness in Australia. It has increased by 4.6 per cent over the last five years. The latest estimates reveal more than 116,000 people were experiencing homelessness in Australia on Census night, representing 50 homeless persons for every 10,000 people. To find out more, visit [here](#).

REPORT: THE STATE OF HOMELESSNESS IN AUSTRALIA

'The State of Homelessness in Australia's Cities' Report was compiled by the Centre for Social Impact at The University of Western Australia (CSI UWA). It looked at Registry Week data from across Australia, where specialist homelessness services interviewed 8,370 individuals experiencing homeless in Australia's major cities over a seven year period. This report is the first study of its kind, drawing on the lived experience of such a large, national cohort of homeless Australians. The data reveals a bleak picture of the state of homelessness, but hope on the part of those experiencing homelessness. The report is available [here](#).

REPORT ON INCARCERATION RATE OF INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS

The Australian Law Reform Commission has released a report on the rate of imprisonment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Titled 'Pathways to Justice—Incarceration Rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples', the report shows that Indigenous men are 14.7 times more likely to be imprisoned than non-Indigenous men and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are 21.2 times more likely to be imprisoned than non-Indigenous women. The report's 35 recommendations include proposals for substantive equality before the law for Indigenous people, fairer enforcement of law, reducing recidivism, alternatives to imprisonment and promoting justice reinvestment. The report is available [here](#).

BOOK: 'GROWING UP ABORIGINAL IN AUSTRALIA'

What is it like to grow up Aboriginal in Australia? This anthology, compiled by award-winning author Anita Heiss, showcases many diverse voices, experiences and stories in order to answer that question. This groundbreaking collection will enlighten, inspire and educate about the lives of Aboriginal people in Australia today. Contributors include: Tony Birch, Deborah Cheetham, Adam Goodes, Terri Janke, Patrick Johnson, Ambelin Kwaymullina, Jack Latimore, Celeste Liddle, Amy McQuire, Kerry Reed-Gilbert, Miranda Tapsell, Jared Thomas, Aileen Walsh, Alexis West, Tara June Winch, and many, many more. Published by Black Inc. For more information visit [here](#).

CARITAS AUSTRALIA AND EDMUND RICE CENTRE OPPOSE POTENTIAL CUTS TO OVERSEAS AID

Caritas Australia and the Edmund Rice Centre have expressed alarm at reports that the Coalition Government is considering cutting Australia's aid budget by up to 10 per cent. This is in addition to the 30 per cent of cuts we have seen since 2013 and would significantly undermine our country's efforts to help end extreme poverty, save lives, and support communities in times of major humanitarian disasters. Mr O'Callaghan pointed to 'generous Australians from every walk of life showing leadership by donating their time, effort and money to stand in solidarity with the world's poorest communities. Yet our government is demonstrating the opposite, choosing instead to walk away from the poor.' Caritas is encouraging Australians to write to their Federal MPs to express opposition to any cuts to overseas aid. Read the Caritas Australia release [here](#) and the Edmund Rice Centre release [here](#).

CAMPAIGN FOR STRONG LEGISLATION TO COMBAT MODERN SLAVERY

Alex Hawke, Assistant Minister for Home Affairs, has announced that the Turnbull government plans to introduce Modern Slavery legislation into parliament and hopes to have it enacted before the end of 2018. A number of NGOs, including the Be Slave Free Network, Freedom United, and STOP THE TRAFFIK Australian Coalition, are coordinating a campaign to ensure that this legislation is robust and effective. The campaign aims to mobilise Australia's consumer power to help bring an end to modern slavery. In particular, these organisations want the law to set new standards for companies to report on modern slavery in their supply chains. More information is available here about the [campaign](#).

MEDIA RELEASE: Cuts to support system leave people seeking asylum in destitution

Thousands of people seeking protection while living in the Australian community are at risk of destitution and homelessness due to the latest government move to completely cut income support for people who need it the most. The government is planning to make cuts to the Status Resolution Support Service (SRSS) program that provides a basic living allowance (typically 89% of Newstart allowance, equating to just \$247 per week), casework support, assistance in finding housing, and access to torture and trauma counselling. The Refugee Council of Australia, Australian Council of Social Service and an alliance of close to 100 civil society organisations, including the Australian Catholic social Justice Council are calling on the government to urgently reverse their position to cut income support for people seeking asylum from 1 April 2018. To read more, visit [here](#). To support the call, visit [here](#).

REFUGEE WEEK – 17 TO 23 JUNE

Refugee Week is Australia's peak annual activity to raise awareness about the issues affecting refugees and celebrate the positive contributions made by refugees to Australian society. Celebrated since 1986, Refugee Week coincides with World Refugee Day (20 June). In 2018, Refugee Week will be held from 17 June to 23 June. The theme for Refugee Week 2018 is #WithRefugees. Today, more than ever, we need a global movement to demand the safety and rights of refugees are protected. In Australia, it is the responsibility of our government and each one of us to ensure people forced to flee from their homes can live with dignity and with hope. To find out more, visit the [Refugee Council of Australia](#).

HELP AN INDIVIDUAL OR FAMILY RESETTLE IN AUSTRALIA

The global refugee crisis is now at a scale never seen before and countries all around the world, including Australia, need to do more to respond. The Australian government is examining ways in which to allow members of the Australian community to sponsor refugees into the country. We believe the Australian community would like to do more to help the world's refugees and it's time to collect the evidence! We know from talking to people in towns all across Australia that there are many people who

are willing to invest time, money and other resources in helping to expand our national response to the refugee situation. Join this movement to show that our community is willing to welcome refugees! For more information, visit the [Refugee Council of Australia](#).

REPORT: LEADING FOR CHANGE – A BLUEPRINT FOR CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP REVISITED.

A report from the Australian Human Rights Commission shows that Australia is widely celebrated as a multicultural triumph, but any such success remains incomplete. There remains significant underrepresentation of cultural diversity in the senior leadership of Australian organisations. This report follows up on the 2016 Leading for Change report, which highlighted the lack of cultural diversity represented within the senior leadership positions in Australian business, politics, government and universities. The report is available [here](#).

MENTAL HEALTH MONTH STARTER KIT

October is Mental Health Month in New South Wales, Victoria, and the ACT. Mental Health Month is an opportunity to raise awareness around mental health & wellbeing, centres around World Mental Health Day, which is marked each year on October 10. A Mental Health Month project or event is a great way to encourage awareness of mental health, and social and emotional wellbeing in your community. It can decrease stigma, and empower people to seek help, for themselves or others. The Mental Health Association NSW has developed this Starter Kit for people considering a project for the occasion. To access the kit and for more information, visit [here](#).

NEW REPORT: ‘THE COST OF PRIVILEGE’

A report commissioned by Anglicare Australia and prepared by Per Capita finds that the cost of tax measures that benefit the wealthiest 20 per cent of Australians is over \$68 billion per annum. Anglicare Director Kasy Chambers says, ‘That is greater than the cost of Newstart, disability support, or any other benefit ... the annual cost of Newstart [is] just under \$11 billion a year. Following the latest round of welfare cuts, these numbers tell us that something has gone badly wrong – we have become a country that cuts from the poorest to give to the richest.’ To access the report, visit [here](#).



ACSJC Publications May 2018

SERIES PAPER 82 – ‘INTO THE DEEP’

In this paper, Peter Arndt examines the issues faced by the indigenous people of West Papua and discusses their claim for freedom and independence. Peter has visited West Papua on several occasions, has met and spoken with people working for freedom and justice, and has heard their accounts of oppression and brutality on the part of police and security forces there. He places the struggle of the West Papuans in the context of the message of the Gospel and Catholic social teaching. ‘That deep reflection on Gospel values and Church teaching is what makes this publication so inspiring. Peter places his friends’ experience in the context of the Scriptures and looks deeply into the Church’s teachings on justice and asks what he must do. He discerns the answer with clarity and courage’ (Bishop Vincent Long, Chairman, ACSJC). To find out more and to order, visit [here](#).

STILL TAKING ORDERS – 2018 SOCIAL JUSTICE DIARY

The 2018 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, go

to: <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/publications/social-justice-diary>

SERIES PAPER 81 – ‘AN ECONOMY THAT WORKS FOR ALL’

This paper examines Australia’s economic policies and their effect on the most vulnerable and expands on themes in the Australian bishops’ 2017–18 Social Justice Statement. ‘An Economy that Works for All’ discusses the serious effects of growing inequality, described by the International Monetary Fund as ‘the defining challenge of our time’. Author Joe Zabar, of Catholic Social Services Australia, also summarises the history behind Australia’s current economic policies and the responses of internationally recognised economists and institutions. He proposes ways in which marginalised and excluded Australians can be helped to share in the fruits of our prosperity. To find out more and to order, visit [here](#).

SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT 2017–2018

This year’s Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Social Justice Statement is entitled ‘Everyone’s Business: Developing an inclusive and sustainable economy’. PDF and Word versions of the Statement as well as a range of print and multimedia resources are available on the ACSJC website, [here](#).

SERIES PAPER 80 – ‘THE Human FACE OF HOMELESSNESS’

This paper is written by Liz de Chastel, Director of Social Policy, and Fr Frank Brennan SJ, Chief Executive Officer of Catholic Social Services Australia. In this paper they examine the realities of life for the more than 100,000 Australians who find themselves without accommodation. Homelessness has particularly severe impacts on children and on older people, especially older women; on people living with mental illness; and on Indigenous Australians. The Catholic bishops of Australia are making homelessness a particular focus of the Church’s mission. This paper asks why so many people are homeless in our rich nation. It looks at some of the many ways in which the Catholic Church is working to help Australians who need suitable housing, and it asks what more the Church can do to respond to the call of Jesus regarding those most in need. To find out more and to order, visit [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. To find out more and to order, visit [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 2018

[Philippines to expel Sr Pat](#)

26-Apr-2018

The Philippines has ordered Sr Patricia Fox to leave the country within 30 days after the immigration bureau revoked her missionary visa for joining protest rallies, an immigration official says. Source: *The Australian*.

[Agencies alarmed by cuts to asylum-seeker programs](#)

24-Apr-2018

The Turnbull Government's decision to cut income support for some asylum-seekers could leave thousands of people only weeks away from disaster, warn Catholic agencies. Source: *The Catholic Weekly*.

[Sr Pat stands up to Philippines president](#)

24-Apr-2018

An Australian religious sister facing potential deportation in the Philippines is laughing off accusations of "disorderly conduct" from Filipino president Rodrigo Duterte. Source: *ABC News*.

[Jesuits welcome \\$229m plan to fix juvenile system](#)

23-Apr-2018

The Northern Territory Government's \$229.6 million investment into reforming its child protection and youth justice systems gives it an opportunity to lead the nation in evidence-based reform, says Jesuit Social Services.

[Refugee groups call for new sponsorship scheme](#)

20-Apr-2018

Refugee groups have launched a joint initiative calling on the Turnbull Government to introduce a scheme that will initially create 5,000 places for new refugees each year, growing to 10,000 over the next five years. Source: *SBS News*.

[Presidential apology to Sr Patricia 'probably' needed](#)

20-Apr-2018

The Philippine president would "probably" need to apologise for ordering the detention of Australian Sr Patricia Fox on an allegation of "disorderly conduct", his spokesman has conceded. Source: *Canberra Times*.

[Bishops called to care for 'our common home'](#)

20-Apr-2018

Human rights, climate change and environmental protection have topped the agenda as Australian bishops joined more than 70 bishops from across Oceania for meetings in Port Moresby from April 11-18. Source: *The Catholic Leader*.

[Faith leaders call on Adani to invest in renewables](#)

20-Apr-2018

Catholic theologians and religious sisters are among diverse faith leaders who have signed a joint letter calling for the proposed Adani coal mine in North Queensland to be abandoned. Source: ARRCC.

[Australian sister freed after 22 hours in detention](#)

18-Apr-2018

Our Lady of Sion Sister Patricia Fox was released by the Philippine authorities yesterday after being held for 22 hours. Source: *CBCP News*.

[Listen to women on conflict resolution: Vatican UN rep](#)

18-Apr-2018

Women's voices must be integrated into all aspects of conflict prevention, peacekeeping and post-conflict operations, according to the Vatican's representative to the United Nations. Source: *Vatican News*.

[Homeless centre considers relocation after outcry](#)

17-Apr-2018

Adelaide's Hutt Street Centre for the homeless is considering relocating after 64 years of operation, as community pressure over nearby anti-social behaviour escalates. Source: *InDaily*.

[Drought affecting youth job prospects, says sister](#)

17-Apr-2018

Sister of Charity Christine Henry believes prolonged drought is one reason outback Queensland has been identified as easily Australia's worst youth unemployment hotspot. Source: *The Catholic Leader*.

[Church needs to be a 'voice for the voiceless'](#)

16-Apr-2018

A Melbourne-born Columban priest has told a Perth audience that the Church has to show love to migrants and defend victims of modern slavery. Source: *The eRecord*.

[Prison should be a last resort: Jesuit Social Services](#)

16-Apr-2018

The Victorian Government's plan to further restrict the use of community correction orders sets a dangerous precedent, with little evidence it will reduce re-offending, says Jesuit Social Services.

[Volunteers, housing sought for Syrian and Iraqi refugees](#)

16-Apr-2018

CatholicCare in Victoria has put out an urgent call for volunteers as it seeks to rehouse Iraqi and Syrian refugee families from temporary accommodation to long-term housing. Source: *Melbourne Catholic*.

[Women religious share stories from the frontline](#)

13-Apr-2018

How can the work of women religious in justice, peace and anti-trafficking efforts be more effectively included into policies at government and international level? Source: *Vatican News*.

[Coalition not matching people's generosity: Caritas](#)

13-Apr-2018

Caritas Australia CEO Paul O'Callaghan says the Turnbull Government's projected cuts to its aid budget is at odds with the generosity of the Australian people and places the country in an unenviable position. Source: *Melbourne Catholic*.

[Oceania bishops meet to discuss regional issues](#)

12-Apr-2018

Bishops from across Oceania are meeting in Papua New Guinea this week to discuss human rights and environmental issues in the region. Source: *ACBC Media Blog*.

[Study reveals experiences of Australia's homeless](#)

12-Apr-2018

On the eve of the launch of a plan to end chronic homelessness in WA, a major Australian study has laid bare the experiences of more than 8000 people who sleep rough. Source: *The West Australian*.

[Service cuts leaving asylum-seekers destitute: Vinnies](#)

12-Apr-2018

Federal government cuts to a service that provided an allowance and other support to asylum-seekers is leaving people destitute, according to the St Vincent de Paul Society's National Council.

[Law reform report tackles jail crisis](#)

11-Apr-2018

Ending jail time for unpaid fines and repealing mandatory sentencing are two recommendations of a review into the over-representation of Indigenous people in prison. Source: *The West Australian*.

[Migration commission head lauds Pope's 'moral leadership'](#)

11-Apr-2018

Australian lawyer Anne Gallagher says Pope Francis' message of "hope and compassion" can help to address fears relating to migration and national security concerns. Source: *Vatican News*.

[Robo-debt program a 'legal and moral injustice'](#)

06-Apr-2018

The Turnbull Government's "robo-debt" program has been unlawfully raising debts with welfare recipients, wreaking "legal and moral injustice", a former administrative appeals tribunal member has said. Source: *The Age*.

[Vatican recalls 50 years since Martin Luther King Jr's death](#)

05-Apr-2018

On the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr, the Vatican's representative to the United Nations says Dr King's belief in the importance of non-violence and the need for global solidarity is shared by Pope Francis. Source: *Vatican News*.

[Refugee program excludes South Sudan, Somalia, Iran](#)

05-Apr-2018

Humanitarian migrants from eight countries will be prioritised under one of Australia’s refugee resettlement programs, with other nationalities told their applications are highly unlikely to be accepted. Source: *The Guardian*.

[Up to 7000 asylum-seekers to lose income support](#)

04-Apr-2018

The Turnbull Government’s plan to cut income support from up to 7,000 asylum-seekers could leave people destitute, hungry and at increased risk of self-harm, refugee advocates say. Source: *The Guardian*.

[Don’t abandon the world’s poor, Caritas urges government](#)

03-Apr-2018

Caritas Australia chief Paul O’Callaghan says he is alarmed to hear that the Turnbull Government is considering cutting Australia’s foreign aid budget by up to 10 per cent.

courtesy [CathNews](#).



Social Justice Diary May 2018

May 2018

1	Tue	St Joseph the Worker READ MORE ↓
2	Wed	
3	Thu	<u>World Press Freedom Day</u>
4	Fri	<u>Yom ha-Shoah</u> , Holocaust Memorial Day
5	Sat	<u>Blessed Edmund Rice</u>
6	Sun	6th Sunday of Easter 1992: <u>Introduction of mandatory detention of asylum seekers in Australia</u>
7	Mon	

8	Tue	<u>World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day</u> 1945: <u>End of World War II in Europe</u>
9	Wed	
10	Thu	1994: <u>Nelson Mandela's Inaugural Address as President of South Africa</u>
11	Fri	
12	Sat	<u>World Fair Trade Day</u>
13	Sun	The Ascension Mother's Day <u>World Communications Day</u> . Theme: The truth will set you free
14	Mon	1971: Pope Paul VI's Apostolic Letter <u>Octogesima Adveniens</u> ('A Call to Action')
15	Tue	<u>International Day of Families</u> 1891: Pope Leo XIII's encyclical <u>Rerum Novarum</u> ('On Capital and Labour') 1931: Pope Pius XI's encyclical <u>Quadragesimo Anno</u> ('On Reconstruction and the Social Order') 1961: Pope John XXIII's encyclical <u>Mater et Magistra</u> ('On Christianity and Social Progress')
16	Wed	<i>World Debt Day</i>
17	Thu	<u>World Telecommunications and Information Society Day</u>
18	Fri	
19	Sat	
20	Sun	Pentecost Sunday Jubilee Sunday

		2002: Timor-Leste Constitution comes into force with Xanana Gusmao as first President
21	Mon	World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development
22	Tue	International Day for Biological Diversity
23	Wed	International Day to End Obstetric Fistula
24	Thu	Mary Help of Christians, Patron of Australia 1948: Foundation of World Council of Churches
25	Fri	Beginning of Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories
26	Sat	National Sorry Day READ MORE ↓
27	Sun	Trinity Sunday Beginning of National Reconciliation Week 1967: Referendum to change articles in the Australian Constitution that discriminated against Indigenous People Beginning of Ramadan
28	Mon	Beginning of Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
29	Tue	International Day of UN Peacekeepers
30	Wed	
31	Thu	World No Tobacco Day