



ACSJC BRIEFING

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

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FROM THE SECRETARIAT

Dear Friends,

It was with great sadness and deep regret that the ACSJC noted the decision to commence war on Iraq. Bishop William Morris, Chairman of the ACSJC said, "Around the world, religious leaders, and in particular Pope John Paul II, are saying a very definite 'No' to the legitimacy of this war."

The ACSJC has endeavoured to make available publications which can assist us in understanding why the Church is so strong in its denial of the legitimacy of this war on Iraq. The ACSJC Discussion Guide: "The Church speaks on war and peace" is available on the ACSJC website and Bruce Duncan's recent paper, "War on Iraq: Is it just?" is available from the Secretariat.

Let us continue to pray for the Iraqi people, that one day they may know true justice and freedom; and for the women and men of the Australian Defence Force who have been deployed to the region, that they may come safely home.

PLEDGE TO ASSIST ASYLUM SEEKERS

You may remember this project, launched for Refugee & Migrant Sunday (August 25, 2002) and coordinated by

the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes (ACLRI), Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office (ACMRO), and Australian Catholic Social Justice Council (ACSJC).

At last, we have received an answer from the Minister, Philip Ruddock. He has declined our offer to assist families to be released from Detention Centres into the community.

The basic reason behind the Minister's refusal to accept our proposal is that he is not satisfied with our commitment to ensure that asylum seekers receiving our assistance would be available for processing and, if ultimately necessary, removal from Australia.

In actual fact, the Department of Immigration have already authorised the release of some of these families on Bridging Visas. Community groups are already assisting these people to find accommodation and are providing them with the means to live. Also in need are the East Timorese asylum seekers. As their appeals to the refugee tribunal are being declined, they are losing their right to work and their access to health services and education.

If you would like to honour your pledge, or if you wish to assist the East Timorese, contact the Secretariat for details.

PALM SUNDAY MARCHES

Palm Sunday is April 13 and there will be marches in all capital cities, and many regional centres. See details in APRIL NOTICES (below). These rallies are an opportunity to show our support for peace in our world. Many of the rallies will commence with inter-faith and ecumenical services.

EASTER

Wishing you the blessings of Easter:
May you share in the joy and the hope of the Resurrection
May you be free to share this joy and hope with others
May you unbind others, liberating people from the prison of racism and the blindness of prejudice
May you be the good news of Jesus the Christ.

Suzette Clark rsc
(Acting National Executive Officer)

LATEST PUBLICATIONS

(orders Tel: 02 9956 5811 or email:
admin@acsjc.org.au)

CSJ Series no. 47: **WAR ON IRAQ: IS IT JUST?** Fr Bruce Duncan

CSJ Series no. 46: **A FAIR SOCIETY? COMMON WEALTH FOR THE COMMON GOOD: TEN YEARS ON** (Contributors: Veronica Brady IBVM, Michael Costigan, Julian Disney AO, Bruce Duncan CSsR, Robert Fitzgerald AM, Thomas Keneally AO, Lowitja O'Donoghue AC, John Phillips AM, John Warhurst

CSJ Series no. 45: **Christian Conscience and Social Justice**, Fr Neil Brown All \$5.50 plus postage

THE STRUGGLE TO DEVELOP A JUST WAR TRADITION IN THE WEST - Fr Bruce Duncan wrote this as the first chapter of WAR ON IRAQ: IS IT JUST, but was omitted due to lack of space. However it is a free HTML or PDF download at http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/Content/publications/documentation/the_struggle_to_develop_a_just_war_tradition_in_the_west.html (PDF link at bottom of page)

SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR 2003 still available (cost \$6.60 inc GST PLUS POSTAGE).

CURRENT ISSUES

MEDIA RELEASE - WAR ON IRAQ - 20 March 2003 - The Australian Catholic Social Justice Council notes with great sadness and deep regret the decision to declare war on Iraq, and is dismayed that Australia is now engaged in a war that does not have the support of the United Nations and the international community.

MEDIA RELEASE - CATHOLIC STUDY CONDEMNS WAR - 19 March 2003 - An 18,000-word Catholic Church document has severely criticised the reasons given by the US and Australian governments for a war on Iraq as 'contrived and misleading'. It argues that the proposed military intervention violates the just war conditions and hence should be rejected as unjust.

MEDIA RELEASE - WAR ON IRAQ UNJUST AND IMMORAL - 19 March 2003 - War on Iraq fails to meet the conditions enshrined in the criteria for a just war and hence would be immoral and unjust, according to a publication of the peak Catholic social justice body in Australia.

MEDIA RELEASE - CATHOLIC JUSTICE COUNCIL RELEASES DISCUSSION GUIDE ON WAR AND PEACE - 25 February 2003: The Australian Catholic Social Justice Council has released a Discussion Guide titled "The Church speaks on war and peace". This Guide is provided as a basic resource for local church communities, justice groups and individuals who are seeking information about the Church's teachings on war and peace. It provides excerpts from a wide range of statements by the Holy Father and other Church leaders on the circumstances facing the people of Iraq. The media release is available at: (http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/Content/media_releases/2003_02_25_1046212038.html)

NCCA - DECADE TO OVERCOME VIOLENCE PROGRAM: The National Council of Churches of Australian has launched a resource kit for the Decade to

Overcome Violence. The Give Peace a Hand kit is available electronically at: <http://www.ncca.org.au/dov/index.asp>

For further information call Rev Jon Inkpin on (02) 9299 2215

APRIL NOTICES

April 13: **PALM SUNDAY PEACE MARCHES AROUND AUSTRALIA -**

ADELAIDE 2:00 pm at Victoria Square. Further information: 08 8231 6982

BRISBANE 1:00 pm at King George Place. Further information: 07 3846 2468

CANBERRA Two groups converging to march to front of Parliament House. 1:30 pm - The Lodge (organised by ACT Network Opposing War), or 1:30 pm - Ecumenical service at Australian Christian Culture Centre in Barton. Further information: 0415 752 013

DARWIN 5:30 pm (meeting point to be advised). Walk to the Water Gardens, Jingili. Further information: 08 8985 1685

HOBART To be advised. Further information: 03 6234 9553

MELBOURNE Two groups converging. Meet at: 2:00 pm - Treasury Gardens, or 2:00 pm - Ecumenical service at Federation Square. Further information: 03 9659 3582 or Victorian Council of Churches 03 9650 4511

SYDNEY 1:00 pm at Belmore Park, opposite Central Station. Further information: 02 9267 8122

PERTH To be advised. Further information: 08 9218 9608

April 17: **CATHOLIC EARTHCARE AUSTRALIA** - World Environment Day is being celebrated in Catholic schools across Australia on June 5th. There is a poster and logo competition currently being held and the closing date is Friday April the 17th. Visit www.catholicearthcareoz.net for further information and details of how to enter the competition.

APRIL TV/RADIO

April 4: **WHO'S ALBERT WOO?** — Looks at the stereotypes attached to Asian men. SBS 8.30pm

April 5: **OIL IN IRAQ: CURSE OR BLESSING?** — The nationalisation of the Iraqi oil industry, the Iran/Iraq war, the state of Iraq's post-war oil industry and the UN Food for Oil program. SBS 7.30pm

April 6: **ENCOUNTER - DISARMING THE SADDAM WITHIN** - What would the 20th Century's giants of peaceful protest, Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, do on the front line of the war on terror? How relevant is the practice of non-violence for today's global turbulence? ABC Radio National 7:00 am (repeat Wed 7:10 pm)

April 8: **BEDEVIL** — Inspired by ghost stories from her extended Aboriginal and Irish Australian families. SBS 12.30pm

April 8: **HANDICAMS, HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE NEWS** — Ever since video footage of police beating up Rodney King was shown on network news, the handcam has played an increasing role in bringing issues to light. SBS 8.30pm

April 9: **UNREPORTED WORLD: IVORY COAST** — The Ivory Coast lies on the cusp of civil war, its economy in tatters. SBS 7.30pm

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May 23: **TATE MODERN: THE EFFECTS OF WAR** - This series delivers some of the most celebrated examples of twentieth century art from the Tate Gallery in London. Jean Fautrier, Alberto Giacometti, Hannah Collins. This episode looks at art and war. ABC TV 11:55 am

More social justice/education program notes at Enhance TV
<http://www.enhancetv.com.au>

MARCH NEWS MONITOR

VINNIES IDENTIFIES THREE MILLION AUSTRALIANS LIVING IN POVERTY - Three million Australians live in poverty and 20% of households lives with constant financial stress, a parliamentary inquiry has been told.

CATHOLIC WELFARE AUSTRALIA SAYS NEW LAW GIVES WITH ONE HAND, TAKES AWAY WITH THE OTHER - The Federal Government's Australians Working Together legislation is a mixed blessing, with some benefits eroded by lack of respect for parental choice about labour force involvement.

JESUIT HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATE SAYS WAR 'NOT IN OUR NATIONAL INTEREST' - Lawyer Fr Frank Brennan has said the Australian Government transported Iraqi asylum seekers to remote detention centres in Australia, and now it's party to the bombing of the relatives in Baghdad, "all in the name of Australia's national interest".

ABORIGINAL CENTRE SETS UP MAKESHIFT MOSQUE FOR AFGHANI REFUGEES - Adelaide's Otherway Centre for Aborigines and Afghanis has temporarily transformed a hall into a mosque to help Afghani refugees and asylum seekers during a special time of prayer and mourning.

LOBBYISTS CALL SUPER POLICY 'THE CAUSE OF A GROWING SOCIAL EVIL' - Australia's

superannuation policy is the cause of "a growing social evil" according to Catholic lobby group PolMin.

POLMIN WELCOMES CLOSURE OF WOOMERA DETENTION CENTRE - The Australian Political Ministry Network (PolMin) welcomed this week's announcement by Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock of the closure of South Australia's Woomera Detention Centre.

MARTINI EMERGES FROM RETIREMENT TO URGE PEACE - A lasting peace only comes at the cost of "turning the other cheek", according to former Archbishop of Milan Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini.

CATHOLIC HEALTH WARNS GAP PLAN WOULD PUSH UP COST OF VISIT TO DOCTOR - Catholic Health Australia has warned of a cost explosion following claims that the Federal Government is considering the introduction of gap insurance to cover higher GP consultation.

PNG CHURCH LOBBYING GETS REPRIEVE FOR PAPUAN ASYLUM SEEKERS - Papua New Guinea postponed plans to repatriate hundreds of asylum seekers from the Indonesian province of Papua following lobbying from the Catholic Church and other groups.

CATHOLIC HEALTH ARGUES ALL MUST HAVE ACCESS TO HEALTH COVER - Catholic Health Australia reiterated its stance that Australia's health system must be founded on a universal insurance entitlement to essential care for everyone.

PONTIFICAL COUNCIL BACKS GROUPS OPPOSED TO DEATH PENALTY - The president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace gave his support to a US delegation of movements that oppose the death penalty and work to reform the judicial system for minors.

- courtesy Church Resources' CathNews, stories in detail at
<http://www.cathnews.com/news/303>

APRIL SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR

April 7 **"BLUE EYES, BROWN EYES"**: In the days following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Jane Elliot, a primary school teacher in Iowa USA, developed the "Blue Eyes Brown Eyes" exercise in response to her students' questions about why King had been killed. She separated her class into two groups based on eye colour. In order to understand racism, Elliot simulated an activity where her students could actually experience it. Elliott told the blue-eyed students they were smarter, nicer, cleaner and deserved more privileges than the students with brown eyes. On the second day of the experiment, she reversed the situation. She discovered that whoever was on top was not only better behaved, but also more likely to (Jane Elliott) Contact SBS TV for The Eye of the Storm, a documentary showing Elliot with her students. Read W. Peters (1987) A Class Divided: Then and Now

April 10 **BELFAST AGREEMENT**: In 1999, the Belfast Agreement was signed in the context of thirty years of violence and civil unrest in which more than 3000 people were killed. The Agreement was a significant milestone for the region because, for the first time, it brought all parties together in the spirit of diplomacy and negotiation. It dealt with relations within Northern Ireland, between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and between the islands of Britain and Ireland. It was supported by 71% of Northern Ireland's people at a Referendum.

The Agreement marked a turning point in sentiment and the birth of a new era of hope in the region. The situation in Northern Ireland has remained relatively stable in the context of the Agreement.

David Ervine is a member of the Northern Ireland Assembly and the leader of the Progressive Unionist Party. He was a key negotiator in the Belfast Agreement and was instrumental in leading paramilitary members away

from bombs and bullets and towards the negotiating table. On a recent visit to Australia, he commented on his experience of Australian society:

Australia is, potentially, the best country on earth. However, nobody wants to walk out of a session in a beauty parlour with work remaining to be done. The reality is that Australia is in so many ways a beautiful country, yet it has two big warts on its face... the shameful treatment of Indigenous people and the xenophobic response towards asylum seekers

April 14 **XANANA GUSMAO ELECTED PRESIDENT OF EAST TIMOR**: East Timor became the world's newest nation in 2002, finally obtaining Independence after 450 years of foreign rule. Xanana Gusmao, a well known freedom fighter, promised to become the "eyes, ears, and mouth" of the Timorese people as their first President.

It has been estimated that 200,000 Timorese people died under Indonesian occupation. Today, the people of an independent East Timor continue to demonstrate great strength and courage in ensuring that their rights are fully recognised. President Gusmao spoke to the international community at his inauguration saying, "Our independence will have no value, if all the people in East Timor continue to live in poverty and continue to suffer all kinds of difficulties."

Caritas Australia continues to work with people in East Timor, particularly in capacity building and rural development. They are currently completing a shelter program in Oecussi, an area devastated by the post-ballot violence. Caritas website: www.caritas.org.au

APRIL 18 GOOD FRIDAY

As we commemorate the execution of Jesus we are sadly aware that many nations still use the death penalty.

REFLECTION: The new evangelisation calls for followers of Christ who are unconditionally pro-life: who will proclaim, celebrate and serve the Gospel of life in every situation. A sign of hope is the increasing recognition that the dignity of human life must never be

taken away, even in the case of someone who has done great evil. Modern society has the means of protecting itself without definitively denying criminals the chance to reform. I renew the appeal I made most recently at Christmas for a consensus to end the death penalty, which is both cruel and unnecessary. - Pope John Paul II, St Louis, 27 Jan 1999

APRIL 20 EASTER SUNDAY

REFLECTION: Can we share in the power of the resurrection?

Can we embrace the freedom offered us and encounter other persons as equals?

Can we unbind others, liberating people from the prison of racism and the blindness of prejudice?

Can we be the good news?

*Australian Catholic Social Justice
Council Leo XIII House, 19 MacKenzie
Street, North Sydney NSW 2060. Tel:
(02) 9956 5811, Fax: (02) 9954 0056,
Email: admin@acsjc.org.au Website:
<http://socialjustice.catholic.org.au> **
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welcome.*