



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,

The Australian Catholic Social Justice Council and its Secretariat would like to wish you a happy New Year. We pray that 2005 will bring justice, peace and wellbeing to those around the world and in our own nation whose dignity is undermined by violence, catastrophe and hardship.

We remember in particular the victims of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster which continues to claim lives in nations that were already enduring great poverty and in some cases conflict and unrest.

CARITAS AUSTRALIA EARTHQUAKE APPEAL

Responding to the overwhelming tragedy and human suffering resulting from the earthquake, Caritas Australia continues to receive donations to meet immediate needs for water, sanitation, food, shelter and medicines and for longer-term rebuilding efforts in affected countries.

By the end of January, Caritas Appeal contributions reached \$9 million, with Caritas workers on the ground already providing urgent aid in Sri Lanka, India, Thailand and Indonesia.

This support is being delivered through long-term partners of Caritas including: Jesuit Refugee Service; Indonesia and Catholic Relief Service in Indonesia; Cari-

tas Sri Lanka; Caritas India; the Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Refugees in Thailand and other programs of the Catholic Church in Thailand.

Thanking all those who have donated to the relief effort, Caritas Australia National Director Jack de Groot said the Catholic relief agency had been overwhelmed by the deep compassion shown by the Australian community and expressed the agency's commitment to working with the people affected by the earthquake and tsunami for many years to come.

Latest news on the Caritas appeal and information on how to assist can be found at: <http://www.caritas.org.au/emergencies/earthquake.htm>

WORLD DAY OF PEACE MESSAGE FOR 2005

On the first of January each year the Holy Father delivers a message for the World Day of Prayer for Peace. The theme used by Pope John Paul II for this year's Message is "Do not be Overcome by Evil but Overcome Evil with Good". The full text of the message can be found on the Vatican's website:

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/messages/peace/index.htm

Pope John Paul II has called on the leaders of nations, the faithful and all people of good will to preserve peace, work for justice and kindle charity.

He says there are many social and political manifestations of evil in our world. Outbreaks of violence in Africa, Palestine, Iraq and the fear experienced by many communities living in fear of terrorism are highlighted.

The message calls for an ever greater commitment to ensure respect for the lives of individuals and entire peoples. A great effort is needed to form people's consciences and to educate the young in these common moral values. These values are essential if we are to ensure "a social, economic and political order respectful of the dignity, freedom and fundamental rights of each person".

Pope John Paul pays particular attention to the extreme poverty afflicting millions around the world. This is a grave obstacle to peace that must be resolved through international solidarity. He focuses on three basic commitments of international solidarity that are essential to addressing world poverty:

- the renewed commitment of the world community meeting the 'Millennium Development Goals'
- progress in the reduction of the foreign debt of poor countries, and
- the commitment of adequate levels of international aid.

The message concludes with a call to all Catholics during this year dedicated to the Eucharist. We are called to recognise that despite every difference of human existence, "we are 'God's family' and that together we can make our own effective contribution to building a world based on the values of justice, freedom and peace".

BEST WISHES TO DR MICHAEL COSTIGAN

The ACSJC wishes Dr Michael Costigan all the best in his retirement. Michael leaves his position as Executive Secretary of the Bishops' Committee for Justice, Development, Ecology and Peace after 17 years of great service in this capacity.

Michael's first major task when taking up his appointment in 1987 was to prepare the way for the formation of the ACSJC. As Executive Secretary of the BCJDEP and a member of the ACSJC, Michael has been a constant source of support to the Council.

The Bishops' Committee has co-ordinated some significant initiatives over the years that have made important contributions both to national public debate and in the life of the Church in Australia. These have included the Bishops' Inquiry into the Distribution of Wealth in Australia which resulted in the landmark re-

port, Common Wealth for the Common Good; a national study of young people and the future; extensive research and a major report on the situation of women in the Church in Australia; and the promotion of the theological and philosophical foundations of what Pope John Paul II has called 'ecological conversion'.

In his retirement Michael hopes to spend time reading, travelling and writing one or two books, as well as following the fortunes of his beloved Collingwood football team. He looks forward to having more time to spend with his family.

The Australian Catholic Social Justice Council and its staff are most grateful for Michael's support and for his substantial contribution to the Church in Australia through the BCJDEP.

John Ferguson
National Executive Officer

LATEST PUBLICATIONS

(Orders Tel: 02 9956 5811 or download an order form from the ACSJC website: <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/CONTENT/PDF/TEMPLATE-ORDERFORM.pdf>)

2005 SOCIAL JUSTICE DIARY/CALENDAR – SEASONS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE: The 2005 Diary/Calendar explores the Gospel challenge to live justly in today's society. A particular social justice theme is developed each month, providing a social justice program for the full year. Information and ideas for prayer and reflection are included. Cost: \$6.60 (inc. GST), plus postage.
http://www.acsjc.org.au/CONTENT/publications/social_justice_calendar.html

DISCUSSION GUIDE – WORLD DAY OF PEACE MESSAGE 2005: The title of the Holy Father's 2005 Message is 'Do not be Overcome by Evil but Overcome Evil with Good'. This Discussion Guide provides a brief summary of the message, some questions for consideration or discussion, and additional resources. Website paper available at: www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au

OCCASIONAL PAPER: THE BEATITUDES AND JUSTICE: Catholic Social Justice Series No.52 – by Fr Gerard Moore SM enunciates the characteristics of the beatitudes and explores the kind of "heart" they require of us in a thorough, deep and thoughtful consideration of each beatitude. (Cost \$6.60 plus postage) (postage rates listed below)

2004 SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY STATEMENT & RESOURCES: Australian Catholic Bishops' Statement: Peace Be With You: Cultivating a Culture of Peace. The ACSJC is continuing to take orders for the Statement. A free electronic version of the 2004 Statement available at:
http://www.acsjc.org.au/CONTENT/publications/documentation/documentation_js01.html

ECUMENICAL SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY KIT: SECURITY AT ALL COSTS? A Christian reflection on where to draw the line. Ecumenical Kit produced by the Social Justice Network of the National Council of Churches, now available (cost: \$6.60 {plus postage: 1 copy \$1.45; 2-3 copies \$2.45})

LEAFLET & PRAYER CARD: TEN STEPS TOWARDS CULTIVATING A CULTURE OF PEACE Now available. Call (02) 9956 5811

OCCASIONAL PAPER: THE TIMOR SEA'S OIL AND GAS: WHAT'S FAIR?
Catholic Social Justice Series No.51 – Fr Frank Brennan SJ considers the current negotiations between Australia and Timor-Leste concerning the resource sharing arrangements and maritime boundaries of the Timor Sea. (Cost \$6.60 plus postage) (postage rates listed below).

(Postage rates for Catholic Social Justice Series Papers: 1 copy \$1; 2-3 copies \$1.45; 4-5 copies \$2.45)

CURRENT ISSUES/RESOURCES

MEDIA RELEASE – POWER WALK SUPPORTS LONG JOURNEY TO JUSTICE – 2 December 2004: Bishop Patrick Power, Deputy Chairman of the ACSJC joined champion footballer Michael Long as he completed the final leg of his walk for Indigenous justice in Canberra. Bishop Power urges all Australians to walk alongside their Indigenous brothers and sisters in their quest for justice and reconciliation, saying, "Michael is highlighting the massive disadvantages faced by Indigenous communities throughout the country. His walk for Indigenous health is a walk for the health of our nation." Bishop Power expressed the hope that Michael's inspiring action would help to move this nation along the road to greater equity for Indigenous Australians in all aspects of their lives. (refer: http://www.acsjc.org.au/Content/media_releases/2004_12_2_1101945027.html)

MEDIA RELEASE – DON'T FORGET HICKS AND HABIB ON HUMAN RIGHTS DAY – 10 December 2004: On Human Rights Day, the ACSJC called on the Federal Government to act to secure justice for the two Australians who have been detained for over three years in US interrogation facilities at Guantanamo Bay. Bishop Christopher Saunders, ACSJC Chairman said: "The detention of Hicks and Habib has gone on for too long. We call on the Australian Government to negotiate with the US an end to the detention and to ensure the Australians have immediate access to the ordinary process of justice in a non-military court." He commended the efforts of lawyers such as Stephen Kenny and Steven Hopper who continue to act on behalf of the two Australians and to raise these vital legal and human rights issues in national debate. (refer: http://www.acsjc.org.au/Content/media_releases/2004_12_10_1102635857.html)

MEDIA RELEASE – COUNCIL URGES COME TO THE TABLE ON TIMOR SEA – 20 December 2004: The ACSJC urged the Australian Government to do all in its power to ensure East Timor has early access to revenues from the oil and gas resources of the Timor Sea. By October 2004, negotiations seeking some resolution to the boundary disputes by the end of the year had broken down. Bishop Christopher Saunders said, "A rich nation like Australia can endure delays in these negotiations... East Timor cannot. ... At stake is the development of billions of dollars worth of revenue. A reasonable share of this revenue is desperately needed to secure the economic viability and sustainable development of East Timor."

Bishop Saunders said, "The ACSJC urges the Australian Government to resume negotiations on Greater Sunrise that will allow fair terms to assist East Timor to be self sufficient and prosperous. Such terms would recognise both countries' right to pursue permanent maritime boundaries relating to the shared petroleum development area in the future." (refer: http://www.acsjc.org.au/Content/media_releases/2004_12_20_1103519819.html)

CARITAS AUSTRALIA "ASIA EARTHQUAKE APPEAL" Caritas Australia continues to receive donations to meet immediate needs for water, sanitation, food, shelter and medicines and for longer-term rebuilding efforts in affected countries. Latest news on the Caritas appeal and information on how to assist can be found at: <http://www.caritas.org.au/emergencies/earthquake.htm>

INFORMATION KIT: "INDIGENOUS HEALTH IN AUSTRALIA" The Fred Hollows Foundation is raising awareness about the health emergency faced by Indigenous communities throughout Australia. The thoroughly researched and accessible briefing papers provide accurate, relevant information on the current status of Indigenous health and its underlying causes. (refer: <http://www.hollows.org/content/TextOnly.aspx?s=146>)

NATSIEC PRAYER DIARY The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Council has produced a resource to support ecumenical prayer and partnerships between Indigenous Australians and between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. The Prayer Diary includes possible readings, prayer concerns for each day and reflections, marking where appropriate key dates in the Indigenous calendar. (refer: http://www.ncca.org.au/natsiec/theology/prayer_diary)

UNIYA PUBLICATION : "A FAIR GO IN AN AGE OF TERROR" This publication produced by the Uniya Jesuit Social Justice Centre brings together papers from the 2004 Jesuit Lenten Seminars and the 2003 Seminars, "Muslims and Christians – Where do we all Stand?" Edited by Sr Patty Fawkner SGS. Cost: \$18.95 (incl GST). Refer: <http://www.uniya.org/>

PROJECTS/ADVOCACY OFFICER WANTED Uniya seeks to respond to regional and global justice challenges for marginalised groups. Uniya is seeking a qualified, highly motivated individual to work in its small team. The successful applicant will be responsible for undertaking detailed research and analysis which will contribute to the development of public policy, particularly in areas relating to human rights, social justice and Australia's relationships in the Asia/Pacific region. Position description with necessary qualifications and competency criteria can be obtained from Veronika Jeffrey (02) 9356 3888 or reception@uniya.org. Send written application addressing criteria to: Sr Patty Fawkner SGS Director, Uniya P.O. Box 522 Kings Cross NSW 1340 by COB 15 Feb 2005.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES BIBLE STUDIES ON PEACE A five session set of bible studies has been produced by the National Council of Churches in Australia 'Decade to Overcome Violence' (DOV) initiative. This resource aims to aid reflection on the four key themes of DOV as developed in Australia - Truth, Mercy-Power, Justice and Community/Koinonia - in relation to the image and reality of Christ's Transfiguration. This resource can be downloaded (with other DOV resources) at www.ncca.org.au/dov/resources

COMPENDIUM OF THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, prepared by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace presented at the Vatican in late October 2004 is now available for purchase. Cardinal Renato Martino, President of the Pontifical Council has said the compendium is "an instrument for the moral and pastoral discernment of the complex events that mark our time, a guide to inspire, ... and an aid to the faithful concerning the Church's teaching in the area of social morality."

The document of over 500 pages in length can be ordered for \$51.95 through Pauline Books & Media outlets in Adelaide (08 8223 2735), Melbourne (03 9882 3424) Sydney (02 9264 8630) or visit online at: <http://www.paulinebooks.com.au>

FEBRUARY NOTICES

FEBRUARY 2: EXHIBITION, "WHEN THE WORLD SAID NO TO WAR". John Pilger will launch this exhibition of images of the rallies of early 2003. The launch will be at 6.00pm for 6.30pm at Pine Street Gallery, 64 Pine St, Chippen- dale, Sydney. RSVP to Karen on 02 9361 4441 or karenadler@iprimus.com.au

FEBRUARY 4: FORUM, "SYDNEY GREENS FORUM". To be chaired by Sen Kerry Nettle, this forum will address a range of important issues including In- digenous justice, the politics and economics of poverty, refugee rights, and the US occupation in Iraq. Speakers will include Andrew Wilkie, Prof. Larissa Behrendt, Dianne Hiles and Prof. Julian Disney. From 6.30pm, Tom Mann Theatre, 136 Chalmers Street, Surry Hills, Sydney. (refer: <http://www.chilout.org/events/index.html>)

FEBRUARY 7 – 9: CONFERENCE, "TRANSFORMATIONS – CULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT". An international confer- ence looking at global and local trends in cultural diversity and sustainable de- velopment. Organised by the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Council of Aus- tralia. To be held at the Manning Clarke Lecture Theatres, Australian National University, Canberra. (refer: <http://www.fecca.org.au/transformations/index.html>)

FEBRUARY 9: LAUNCH, "2005 PROJECT COMPASSION APPEAL". His Emi- nence George Cardinal Pell will celebrate Mass at 12.10pm at St Mary's Cathe- dral in Sydney on Ash Wednesday and marking the launch of Project Compas- sion.

FEBRUARY 9: PRESS CLUB ADDRESS, "COMING OF AGE: THE SEX DIS- CRIMINATION ACT, WOMEN, MEN, WORK AND FAMILY". Address by Pru Goward, Sex Discrimination Commissioner. 12.00pm to 2.00pm, National Press Club, Canberra (refer: www.npc.org.au/speakers.htm)

FEBRUARY 9 – 11: CONFERENCE, "WINDOW ON ECONOMICS 2005: A PROGRAM FOR SOCIAL POLICY ADVOCATES". Hosted by Oz Prospect, this conference is for people working in advocacy roles in not-for-profit organisations who are involved in policy debates where economics is used but who do not have a background in economics themselves. Issues include: government budgets and

taxation; the effects of privatization; evaluating health outcomes; unemployment and the labour market; economics and the environment. Held at St Hilda's College, The University of Melbourne, Parkville, Victoria. (refer: http://coss.net.au/events/acoss/1102304305_15686_20041206.jsp?subsite=acoss)

FEBRUARY 16 – 17: WORKSHOP, "AUSTRALASIAN WELFARE HISTORY".

A two-day workshop aiming to provide practitioners of welfare history with a forum in which they can reflect on the broad social, political and cultural contexts which have shaped the ways in which welfare has been understood and delivered. St Patrick's Campus, 115 Victoria Parade, Fitzroy, Victoria. For further info contact n.musgrove@pgrad.unimelb.edu.au or visit http://www.acu.edu.au/acu_national/News__Events_Calendar/Events.cfm

FEBRUARY 16 – 27: THEATRICAL PRODUCTION, "SUBCLASS 26A". Deals with the reality of human experience in bureaucratic systems. What does the system do to the human being on both sides of the immigration booth? What does it mean to leave, to be displaced, to be examined, to be accepted or rejected? 45 Downstairs, Flinders Lane, Melbourne, Victoria, bookings (03) 9662 9966 (refer: http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/html/news_and_events/news_and_events.html)

FEBRUARY 17: EVENT, "10 YEARS OF THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK IN CANBERRA".

A celebration of 10 years of the School of Social work. Professor Jim Ife, will reflect on "the future of social work and welfare - keeping human rights on the agenda". There will also be a panel discussion on "The impact of the School on the community over the last ten years". 3.30pm: Canberra Campus (Signadou), 223 Antill Street, Watson, ACT. To attend contact (02) 6209 1149 or email swadmin@signadou.acu.edu.au (refer: http://www.acu.edu.au/acu_national/News__Events_Calendar/Events.cfm)

FEBRUARY 17: LAUNCH, "FAMILY OF SIEV X". Perth launch of Family of SIEV X to include guest speaker, short video on SIEV X, photographic exhibition, and music. 6.00pm to 8.00pm in a central Perth location yet to confirmed. (refer: <http://www.chilout.org/events/index.html> or <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FamilyofSIEVX/>)

FEBRUARY 18: PUBLIC LECTURE, "SOCIAL JUSTICE AND CULTURAL RECOGNITION".

Andy Blunden, Julie Connolly and Geoff Boucher speak at the 8th Annual University of Melbourne Hegel Summer School. 9:00 am - 05:00 pm at the University of Melbourne. Refreshments are included in the \$20/\$10 registration fee. Enquiries: (03) 9380 9435. (refer: <http://home.mira.net/~andy/seminars/18022005.htm>)

FEBRUARY 18: LAUNCH, "TURNING THE TIDE".

Rural Australians for Refugees (RAR) will be launched in Taree on February 18th at Ormsby House. Playwright Shahin Shafaei will support the launch, performing a monologue from the play 'Through the Wire'. From 7.00 pm at Ormsby House, Taree. (refer: <http://www.ruralaustraliansforrefugees.org/template.php3?area=news&content=noticeboard>)

FEBRUARY 21 – JUNE 24, COURSE: "MISSION THROUGH DIALOGUE ON ECOLOGY". As part of the MA studies in Mission offered at the Strathfield Catholic Institute of Sydney, Fr Charles Rue will be offering a course on Dialogue with the Environmental Movement in Australia. This course recognizes the ecological movement as a work of the Spirit and explores ways in which the Church can dialogue with that movement in Australia. For more information call (02) 9752 9500 or refer: <http://www.cis.catholic.edu.au/ca.htm>

FEBRUARY 22 – MARCH 10: JESUIT LENTEN SEMINARS, "HONESTY MATTERS – THE ETHICS OF DAILY LIFE". The 2005 Jesuit Lenten Seminars bring together a number of people prominent in public life to talk about this fundamental quality. The seminars will run from 7.30 to 9.30pm at the following locations and dates: Adelaide, Feb 22 at St Ignatius' Parish, Norwood; Melbourne, Feb 23 at Xavier College, Barkers Road, Kew; Canberra, Feb 28 at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, 15 Blackall St, Barton; Western Sydney, March 1 at Loyola Senior High School, 91 North Pde, Mt Druitt; Sydney, March 2 at Marist College, 270 Miller Street, North Sydney; Brisbane, March 7 at Christian Brothers College, Gregory Terrace; Wollongong, March 10 at Edmund Rice College Hall, 112 Mt Keira Rd, Wollongong; For more details refer: <http://www.uniya.org/news/lenten2005.html>

FEBRUARY 22 – 28: EXHIBITION, "SIEV X MEMORIAL EXHIBITION OF STUDENTS' WORKS". Young people have been developing designs for a memorial to remember the families who died coming to Australia to find a safe place to live. The student's words and designs show an amazing depth of compassion and insight into the plight of refugees and asylum seekers. 10.00am – 4.00pm daily, Nicholas Hall, Wesley Church, 148 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne. (refer: <http://www.ruralaustraliansforrefugees.org/template.php3?area=news&content=noticeboard>)

FEBRUARY 23: WORKSHOP, "DEBT, MONEY AND BUDGET DEFICITS". The Centre of Full Employment and Equity (CofFEE) is pleased to announce its first Workshop of 2005. A range of scholars will speak on issues such as debt and deflation, demand, the intergenerational debate. Participation in the workshop is free. 11:00am to 3.00pm at the 'Research Cottage' on the Callaghan Campus of the University of Newcastle. For further details refer: <http://e1.newcastle.edu.au/coffee/events/eventsview.cfm?Event=CofFEE%20Workshop%20%2D%20Debt%2C%20money%20and%20budget%20deficits>

FEBRUARY 23: PRESS CLUB ADDRESS BY SENATOR THE HON AMANDA VANSTONE, Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs. 12.00pm to 2.00pm, National Press Club, Canberra (refer: www.npc.org.au/speakers.htm)

FEBRUARY 23 – JUNE 1: STUDY GROUP ON CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING. A group will be meeting on Wednesday afternoons from 1 to 4 pm from February through June at St Paul's Theological College in Brisbane to study Catholic Social Teachings. The major Church documents since Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and including the Australian Bishops' *Common Wealth for the Common Good* (1992) will be introduced by Lecturer Fr. Kevin McGovern. The cost is \$340 (audit) or \$540 (full participation). For more information, contact Fr Kevin on 0409 635 963. To register, contact St Paul's on (07) 3621 8900.

FEBRUARY 25 – 27: BARMAH BEAT FESTIVAL, "BRIDGING THE CULTURAL GAP THROUGH ACKNOWLEDGEMENT". A three-day riverfront community festival, celebrating our diverse culture on Indigenous Land through Ceremony and Music. To be held at the Barmah Forest, on the Murray River, Dhungalla. \$10 per head camping fee. (refer: <http://www.lunardebris.net/barmahbeat/>)

(email news of your forthcoming social justice event by the last week of each month to: admin@acsjc.org.au)

DECEMBER-JANUARY NEWS MONITOR

ARCHBISHOP CHALLENGES AUSTRALIANS' SELECTIVE GOODWILL: Adelaide's Archbishop Philip Wilson issued an Australia Day call for Australians to rethink their hopes and dreams for a nation currently suffering a "schizophrenia of goodwill".

POPE CALLS ATTENTION TO AIDS IN DEVELOPING WORLD: Pope John Paul said the Church and its health care workers should pay particular attention to helping AIDS sufferers in the developing world, where adequate health care does not exist.

BAKHTIYARIS ARRIVE BACK IN AFGHANISTAN: Centacare Director Dale West confirmed the Bakhtiyari family is back in Afghanistan according to media reports.

WORLD DAY FOR MIGRANTS & REFUGEES: POPE STRESSES "INTEGRATION" Pope John Paul II underlined the importance of "integration among peoples which calls for a just balance between affirming one's own identity and recognizing that of others".

VENEZUELAN PRELATE CALLS FOR DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS: Troubled Venezuela needs to see a "defence and promotion of the dignity of the person and the totality of his human rights," said Archbishop Baltazar Porras in his opening address at the Venezuelan Bishops' Conference.

ZIMBABWE PAPER THREATENED OVER INTERVIEW WITH ARCHBISHOP: The Zimbabwean government's Media and Information Commission threatened to close down the country's latest newspaper, the *Weekly Times*, within seven days after its first edition, which carried an interview with Archbishop Pius Ncube of Bulawayo.

POPE LISTS FOUR GREAT CHALLENGES FOR HUMANITY: In his annual address to the Vatican diplomatic corps, Pope John Paul II set out four challenges facing the world's leaders: the defence of life, the conquest of hunger, the pursuit of world peace, and the advance of religious freedom.

HEART-WRENCHING GREETING FOR AUSSIE AID WORKERS: Indonesians are greeting Australian aid workers and defence personnel to the devastated province of Aceh with the phrase "Indonesia menangis", meaning "Indonesia cries". It has become a slogan to the Indonesian people despite their strained relations in the past with the Acehnese.

BISHOP DENOUNCES ASIAN ADOPTION PROFITEERS: Bishop Elio Sgreccia, the newly appointed president of the Pontifical Academy for Life, denounced the "traffic in human lives" that arose in southeast Asia after the tsunami there.

LATIN AMERICAN BISHOPS URGE CAUTION ON FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS: El Salvador's ratification of the Central American Free Trade Agreement once again threw the spotlight on economic integration efforts in Latin America and raised concerns about the possible impact of free trade pacts on poor people in the region.

BRIGIDINE SAYS BAKHTIYARI FAMILY 'VICTIMS OF CRUEL DEED': Sr Brigid Arthur, the nun who escorted Woomera detention centre escapees Alamar and Muntazer Bakhtiyari to the British consulate in Collins Street to seek political asylum in 2002, described the imminent deportation of the Bakhtiyari asylum seeker family as a tough pre-Christmas blow.

BISHOP CALLS AUSTRALIA TO RATIFY KYOTO: Catholic Earthcare chairman, Bishop Christopher Toohy said Australia should ratify the Kyoto Protocol in order to stand in solidarity with the 150 countries which have agreed to abide by the United Nations' global warming agreement.

COUNCIL URGES GOVT TO 'COME TO TABLE' ON TIMOR SEA: The Australian Catholic Social Justice Council called on the Australian Government to do all in its power to ensure East Timor has early access to revenues from the oil and gas resources of the Timor Sea.

US THEOLOGIAN CALLS FOR 'SEAMLESS GARMENT' APPROACH TO LIFE ISSUES: Notre Dame theology professor Fr Richard McBrien attacked bishops who hold a pro-life position on selective issues, claiming that they negate the importance of other concerns such as capital punishment, just war, or social justice.

COMMUNITY TO PRAY FOR PALM ISLAND RECONCILIATION: The Catholic Church joined the Indigenous community in prayers for reconciliation in Townsville, in north Queensland, last night.

BRISBANE CATHOLICS URGED TO BOYCOTT SHOPS ON BOXING DAY: Brisbane's Catholic Justice and Peace Commission welcomed the Queensland Government's decision to prevent major retail outlets in many parts of South-East Queensland from trading on Boxing Day.

BISHOP'S INCREASED CONCERN OVER BAXTER SITUATION: Bishops' Committee for Migrants and Refugees Chairman Bishop Joseph Grech expressed sorrow and concern at the current situation at South Australia's Baxter Immigration Detention Centre.

HICKS AND HABIB FOCUS OF BISHOP'S HUMAN RIGHTS DAY MESSAGE: Bishop Christopher Saunders of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council issued a Human Rights Day call on the Federal Government to act now to secure justice for two Australians who have been detained for over three years in US interrogation facilities.

POPE ENDORSES WORLD BAN ON LANDMINES: In a message delivered to an international landmines conference in Nairobi, Pope John Paul II challenged all nations to join in the Ottawa Convention, which was adopted in 1997 with the aim of the complete elimination of landmines.

ACU COMMENDED FOR PROJECT TO BOOST NUMERACY OF DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN: An Australian Catholic University research project designed to improve the numeracy skills of disadvantaged children gained an honourable mention in the 2004 Business/Higher Education Round Table (B-HERT) awards for Best Research and Development Collaboration.

- courtesy Church Resources' CathNews, stories in detail at <http://www.cathnews.com/news/412> and <http://www.cathnews.com/news/501>

FEBRUARY SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 9 ASH WEDNESDAY

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, a time during which we are invited to prepare for Easter and the coming of the risen Jesus into our life and our world. It is a time for personal conversion. Traditionally, there are three ways we can participate in this season of preparation and conversion: through prayer, fasting and giving alms.

PROJECT COMPASSION

Through Project Compassion, we can prepare ourselves by going without some activity or thing (fasting), and giving the money we save (alms giving) to the appeal. When we attend Lenten Masses, we can join others in praying for those who will be assisted by the funds raised by the Project Compassion Appeal.

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The United Nations Millennium Development Goals are the outcome of negotiations that took place at the Millennium Summit of September 2000, which brought together Heads of State, UN development agencies and civil society organisations from all over the world. Eight goals were set aiming to halve world poverty by 2015:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development

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admin@acsjc.org.au Website: <http://socialjustice.catholic.org.au> ** ACSJC Briefing is sent by email at the beginning of each month (except January). To subscribe or unsubscribe, go to the front page of the website Comments and contributions are also welcome.