



# 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](http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au)*

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## FROM THE SECRETARIAT

Dear Friends,

### **SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY, DREAMING FROM THE HEART, MAKE INDIGENOUS POVERTY HISTORY**

Social Justice Sunday is celebrated on the 24th September. The Catholic Bishops' 2006 Social Justice Sunday Statement will be launched on Thursday 14th September.

The Statement, 'The Heart of Our Country', reflects on Pope John Paul II's 1986 address to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of Australia.

You can place your order for the Statement with the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council. Visit the ACSJC website (<http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au>) for details. Associated material, including liturgy notes, teachers' resources and other information, will soon be available on the website.

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council is preparing for the Dreaming from the Heart assembly in Alice Springs in October. Details of this and associated events can be found on the NATSICC website at: [http://www.natsicc.org.au/alice\\_springs\\_2006.htm](http://www.natsicc.org.au/alice_springs_2006.htm)

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission, in conjunction with the Social Justice Network of the National Council of Churches of Australia, has produced an ecumenical CD-ROM for Social Justice Sunday entitled 'Make Indigenous Poverty History'. The resource applies the Millennium Development Goals to the social and economic circumstances faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. For further information visit <http://www.ncca.org.au/natsiec/miph> or call the ACSJC on (02) 9956 5811.

## **CALLS FOR JUSTICE FOR DAVID HICKS**

'It is time for the Australian government to increase efforts to secure a resolution to the case of David Hicks.' That's the call of Bishop Christopher Saunders, Chairman of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council.

The ACSJC says the Australian Government must act immediately and decisively to end the indefinite detention of one of its citizens.

## **ALMOST FIVE YEARS IN DETENTION**

For nearly five years David Hicks has been held in detention pending trial by a process that the U.S. Supreme Court has now ruled to be unconstitutional and contrary to the Geneva Conventions.

He was captured by the Northern Alliance, handed over to U.S. forces in Afghanistan in 2001 and transferred to a military detention complex at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba. It was a further two years or more before he was deemed eligible to stand trial before a special military commission and charged with conspiracy, attempted murder and aiding the enemy.

The military commissions were disbanded after the U.S. Supreme Court brought down its recent ruling.

One of the reasons he has been detained for so long is that, under an order signed by President Bush, non-U.S. citizens picked up in Afghanistan could be treated as 'unlawful combatants'. This newly-created category removed detainees from the protections of international laws and conventions to which Australia and the U.S. are both signatories – including the Geneva Conventions and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

David Hicks continues to be held in a legal 'limbo'. He was initially interrogated without legal advice and without charge. As the affair has dragged on, there are increasing concerns for his physical and mental health. He and the other detainees have been held in conditions and treated in a manner which reputable agencies such as the International Red Cross and Amnesty International say amounts to torture. The legal challenges against the Pentagon's military tribunal process have taken more time.

Following the recent U.S. Supreme Court Decision, the U.S. Government has been required to ensure that its prisoners are treated according to the Geneva Conventions. The rights afforded under the Convention include, among others, the speedy laying of charges, no confinement beyond three months while awaiting trial, no moral or physical coercion to induce admissions and the right to a fair trial and appeal.

Currently the U.S. administration is working with Congress to determine a process by which military commissions can proceed with prosecutions against enemy combatants accused of war crimes. It is yet to be seen whether these tribunals will offer an adequate standard of justice. It is also unclear how long David Hicks' detention will continue while the new process is established.

An ongoing concern is the situation, begun under the now defunct military tribunals, whereby a defendant could continue to be held as an 'enemy combatant' for the duration of hostilities even when exonerated – an indefinite period in the so-called War on Terror.

In fact, much damage has already been done. As Major Michael Mori rightly insisted in his recent visit to Australia, 'Justice delayed is justice denied'. We see this in the withholding of basic legal and human rights: A long delay in laying proper charges, faulty legal procedures, and the prospect of indefinite detention without trial. These are the conditions that David Hicks and several hundred others continue to endure at Guantanamo.

## **OUR CALL FOR AN END TO INDEFINITE DETENTION**

Recent reports of statements by Attorney-General Philip Ruddock that the Australian Government will try to have Mr Hicks returned to Australia if no new charges are laid by November provide some encouragement. The Attorney General said, 'If it became clear that the United States were not proceeding with charges against him we would seek his return.'

Responding to these reports, Bishop Saunders said, 'While these are welcome developments, [the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council] deplores any further detention of Mr Hicks. If he has a case to answer, he should be tried without further delay by a competent and independent tribunal with all of the protections of the rule of law that Australian citizens would expect, compliant with the Geneva Conventions. Otherwise his continued indefinite detention can no longer be justified.'

Some people might say that because it is alleged David Hicks was found assisting the Taliban, and he 'should get what's coming to him'. Many other things have been alleged in public debate. He has been cast as 'traitor', an 'Al Qaeda trainee', a 'homegrown terrorist', 'failed martyr', and branded 'the worst of the worst'. The response of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council is that, if he has a case to answer, it should be before a properly constituted court – not trial-by-media or under an inferior system of justice.

While many will be wondering about the guilt or innocence of David Hicks, surely all Australians citizens are entitled to a fair trial should they be accused of an offence. This right must be guaranteed, regardless of the nature of charges laid against an individual, as the only means for legitimately establishing their guilt or innocence.

## **MORE COULD BE DONE**

Attorney-General Ruddock's recent undertaking to try to have David Hicks returned to Australia if no charges are laid might provide some hope that the detention will end, but the Government could have gone further, and done so much sooner.

The Government did gain some concessions under the previous system – not least of which was protection from the death penalty. The Attorney General's office assured Australians last week that this important protection would remain in any new system that was established. A number of delegations have been sent to visit David, of course, and the Government says it has repeatedly made known to the U.S. that it wants a trial moved along quickly.

The British Government secured the release of its nationals after their Attorney-General, Lord Goldsmith, protested that the US tribunals would not deliver a fair trial in accordance with international standards. The Canadian Government did the same. Even the fledgling government in Kabul has been able to secure the return of a number of Afghan nationals.

Now, international momentum is growing for the U.S. to close Guantanamo and afford detainees basic justice. British Prime Minister Tony Blair and the Archbishop of Canterbury have both called Guantanamo a legal anomaly that needs to end. Cardinal Renato Martino, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace at the Vatican, says that human dignity is not being respected in this prison. There are scores of others – among them Lex Lasry, Jimmy Carter, Geoffrey Robertson, Mary Robinson, Malcolm Fraser – who have joined this call for justice.

## **JUSTICE, EVEN IN TIMES OF WAR**

Many will find the call for justice on behalf of David Hicks' or any other detainee a challenge. David Hicks is not a popular man. But this is not a popularity contest.

As Christians we believe that human dignity belongs to all people by virtue of the fact that we have been created in the image and likeness of God. The basic dignity owed is not withdrawn because of what someone is alleged to have done or the circumstances in which they are apprehended. There should be no place where human dignity and fundamental human rights are not to be respected – even in the context of the 'War on Terror'.

In his World Day of Peace message for 2006, Pope Benedict XVI emphasised the importance of humanitarian law by recalling the words in the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, that 'not everything automatically becomes permissible between hostile parties once war has regrettably commenced'. The Holy Father said that 'in a variety of situations and in different settings, the Holy See has expressed its support for this humanitarian law, and has called for it to be respected and promptly implemented, out of the conviction that the truth of peace exists even in the midst of war. ... Its value must be appreciated and its correct application ensured; it must also be brought up to date by precise norms applicable to the changing scenarios of today's armed conflicts and the use of ever newer and more sophisticated weapons.' (n.7, "In Truth, Peace", Pope Benedict XVI, Message for the World Day of Peace, January 2006)

The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church highlights the appropriate response to the scourge of terrorism: "Acts of terrorism strike at the heart of human dignity and are an offence against all humanity; there exists, therefore, a right to defend oneself from terrorism. However, this right cannot be exercised in the absence of moral and legal norms, because the struggle against terrorists must be carried out with respect for human rights and for the principles of a State ruled by law." (n.514).

The Church also highlights some basic principles of human rights and the rule of law – like the prohibition against torture or the need to maintain the presumption of innocence. The Compendium warns against the 'use of detention for the sole purpose of trying to obtain significant information for the trial' and the impact of excessive delays which result in 'a real injustice'. (n.404)

We can be reasonably sure that all Australians would like to think that, if a family member or loved one found themselves in strife overseas, even through their own fault, poor decisions, or bad luck, that the Government would do everything in its power to protect their rights. This expectation should extend to all Australians. Indeed, under the international human rights treaties and conventions to which Australia and the U.S. are both signatories, the expectation should extend further.

Out of a basic concern for David Hicks' physical and mental health, five years is too long and the Australian Government needs to do more to end the indefinite detention now. To date, every effort to bring him to trial has failed. The extended process of putting in place another special procedure must not condemn him to further detention with no end in sight.

*John Ferguson*  
*National Executive Officer*

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## **CURRENT ISSUES/RESOURCES**

### **MEDIA RELEASE - BISHOP CALLS FOR JUSTICE FOR DAVID HICKS (22 August 2006)**

It is time for the Australian government to increase efforts to secure a resolution to the case of David Hicks, the Chairman of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council, Bishop Christopher Saunders, says. "For nearly five years David Hicks has been held in detention pending trial by a process that the US Supreme Court has ruled to be unconstitutional and contrary to the Geneva Conventions." (refer:

[http://www.acsjc.org.au/Content/media\\_releases/2006\\_08\\_22\\_1156252257.html](http://www.acsjc.org.au/Content/media_releases/2006_08_22_1156252257.html))

### **NATSICC: DREAMING FROM THE HEART**

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council is preparing for the celebration of the 20th Anniversary of Pope John Paul II's visit to Alice Springs by holding its 7th National Assembly, Dreaming from the Heart, in Alice Springs from 2 – 7 October, 2006. The original visit occurred in 1986 and was the venue for one of the Pope's most important speeches, his address to Aboriginal people. To find out more or make your booking visit the NATSICC website ([http://www.natsicc.org.au/alice\\_springs\\_2006.htm](http://www.natsicc.org.au/alice_springs_2006.htm)) and download the registration booklet.

### **RESOURCE: UNJUST GENES – LIFE AND DEATH FOR SALE**

Columban Ecologist, Fr Charles Rue, has co-produced a new DVD which draws on interviews with scientists, farmers and campaigners overseas and in Australia. The DVD aims to raise public awareness and promote clarity on the issue of transgenic food. Applying totally new bi-technology processes inherent in recombinant DNA technology poses major threats to food production and consumption, human health, biodiversity, corporate control of the world's staple foods and the privatisation of science and research. It is hoped that this DVD will lead to informed advocacy by consumers, farmers, legislators, religious leaders and all people of good will. The DVD comes with a discussion booklet and is available for \$25 including GST and postage. Copies can be ordered from: Columban Mission Centre, PO Box 752, Niddrie VIC 3042. Ph (03) 9375 9475 or email [info@columban.org.au](mailto:info@columban.org.au) (refer: <http://www.columban.org.au>)

### **CONTROL ORDERS, JACK THOMAS AND ANTI-TERROR LAWS**

Mr Thomas was recently placed on an interim control order under new Anti-Terrorism legislation, after having his terrorism-related conviction overturned earlier in the month. He will soon appear before a magistrate to have determined whether the control order will remain. Concerns about how control orders and other provisions of the Anti-Terrorism Bill (No. 2) 2005 would operate were raised by many legal, church and community groups in an Inquiry of the Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee late last year. To read the submissions of a range of organisations, including the ACSJC, who expressed concerns over these provisions, visit:

[http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/legcon\\_ctte/terrorism/submissions/sublist.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/legcon_ctte/terrorism/submissions/sublist.htm)

**POSITION VACANT: AFTINET CAMPAIGNER**

The Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network (AFTINET) is advertising the position of Trade Justice Campaigner: 4-5 days per week from late September 2006 to June 2007. The work will include assessing the impacts of the US-Australia Free Trade Agreement, and community education about proposed Free Trade Agreements with China and other countries. Tasks include administration, research, policy development, submission writing, community education, campaigning, political lobbying, liaising with network members and fundraising. For details of salary and selection criteria, call AFTINET on (02) 8898 6500 or 0419 695 841. Applications must address the selection criteria and must be delivered in hard copy or faxed by close of business on Wednesday September 6, 2006. (refer: <http://www.aftinet.org.au/>)

**CALL FOR APPLICATIONS: WOMEN'S INTERFAITH FELLOWSHIP**

The Council for Australian Catholic Women invites Catholic women aged 25-35, with an interest, experience and/or capacity in leadership in interfaith relations to apply for the "Young Catholic Women's Interfaith Fellowship" which will take place in Canberra from February 1 to May 20, 2007. Applications close on September 8, 2006. For further information phone (02) 6201 9864 or visit the CACW website: [www.cacw.catholic.org.au](http://www.cacw.catholic.org.au).

**WEBSITE: SISTERS OF CHARITY ADVOCACY NETWORK**

The Sisters of Charity Advocacy Network (SCAN) addresses major social justice issues, provides the opportunity for an immediate response to particular issues, acts with and for the oppressed and marginalised, and has the numbers to make a difference. The SCAN website contains information about coming events and two issues of immediate importance – Human Trafficking and Trade Justice. Visit the SACN website for more information: <http://www.scan.org.au/index.html>

**RESOURCE: HREOC ON INDIGENOUS RIGHTS**

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission has released a new community education resource titled 'Discrimination and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women - Get the facts: Know your rights'. Developed in partnership with the National Network of Indigenous Women's Legal Services Inc., it provides useful information on race, sex and disability discrimination, with a particular emphasis on pregnancy discrimination in the workplace. To obtain a copy call (02) 9284 9600 or log onto [http://www.humanrights.gov.au/get\\_the\\_facts/](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/get_the_facts/)

**FAIR TRADE COFFEE COMPANY OPENS IN GLEBE**

The first café in Sydney, and possibly Australia, to sell and serve only fair trade coffee has opened. The Fair Trade Coffee Company is an initiative of Palms Australia. Palms Australia places volunteers to meet requests of communities around the world to reduce poverty through skill exchange. The café will not only assist to provide growers in third world countries with a living wage, but enlighten consumers about the broader issues and circumstances of the communities where the coffee is grown. Roger O'Halloran of Palms Australia says, "Coffee producers under contract to the big companies get less than five cents per cup. It's hard to be happy about that when coffee is \$3.00 per cup. To pay them fairly only requires two or three cents more to go in their direction, so we won't even need to pass that on to consumers." Visit: 33 Glebe Point Road, Glebe, Sydney. (refer: <http://www.palms.org.au/fairtradecoffeecompany/>)

## **MARGARET DOOLEY YOUNG WRITERS AWARD**

Eureka Street magazine recently opened the second annual Margaret Dooley Young Writers Award, a competition open to all Australian writers under the age of 40. The award asks writers to submit two pieces of reasoned ethical argument, based on humane values – a tradition kept alive by Eureka Street magazine for the past 15 years in Australia. The winning essays will be published in the December edition of Eureka Street, and the writer will receive a \$2000 cash prize as well as further opportunities to write for this iconic magazine. Entrants must submit two previously unpublished articles that offer the following: ethical reflection directed to a non-specialist audience on any serious topic, appeal to humane values, clear argument and elegant expression, and a generosity and courtesy of spirit animating forceful argument. Entries close 5th October 2006. For more information contact (03) 9427 7311 or visit: <http://www.margaretdooleyaward.com>

## **SOCIAL ACTION OFFICE QLD – "PATCHWORK PROJECT"**

The Social Action Office (SAO) of the Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes, Queensland is running a community project to monitor the impact and lived experience of the new industrial relations, individual contracting and welfare to work environments. You can participate in the project by joining a 2 hour workshop of story sharing and recording in your organisation, group or workplace or by simply reflecting on and writing up a short story of change and sending it back to SAO. For more information contact: (07) 3891 5866 or visit: [http://www.sao.clriq.org.au/ir\\_campaign/ir\\_patchwork.html](http://www.sao.clriq.org.au/ir_campaign/ir_patchwork.html)

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## **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>)*

### **2006 SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY STATEMENT – ORDER NOW!**

This year's Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Social Justice Sunday Statement is entitled "The Heart of Our Country – dignity and justice for our Indigenous sisters and brothers". The ACSJC is now taking orders for the Statement (minimum of 10 – very affordable price). Don't leave the placing of your order to the last moment. A special order form for the Social Justice Sunday Statement is available on the ACSJC website: <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au>

**PRAYER CARD & LEAFLET:** Ten steps towards dignity and justice for Indigenous Australians Now available. Call (02) 9956 5811

**ECUMENICAL CD-ROM:** 'Make Indigenous Poverty History'  
Now available. Call (09) 9956 5811

### **SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY STATEMENT SUMMARY AND LITURGY NOTES**

Now available at: [www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au](http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au)

**TEACHERS' RESOURCE AND POWERPOINT PRESENTATION:** available soon on the ACSJC website.

**SERIES PAPER: CATHOLICS AND NATURE: TWO HUNDRED YEARS OF ENVIRONMENTAL ATTITUDES IN AUSTRALIA.**

Catholic Social Justice Series No.56 - Concern for the environment has played a significant role in the Catholic Church in Australia since the 19th century. Fr Charles Rue SSC traces the development of environmental thought in Australian Catholicism. (\$6.60 a copy, plus postage – postage rates listed below)

**SERIES PAPER: FROM MONEY TO MEANING: YOUNG PEOPLE AND WORK.**

Catholic Social Justice Series No.56 – the Australian Young Christian Workers address the issue of young people and casual work. (\$6.60 a copy, plus postage – postage rates listed below)

**PASTORAL LETTER: THE VOICE OF VULNERABLE WORKERS IN THE CHANGING WORLD OF WORK**

The Pastoral Letter issued by Bishop Christopher Saunders for the Feast of St Joseph the Worker in 2006 is available and can be downloaded from the ACSJC website: [www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au](http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au) (Postage rates for Catholic Social Justice Series Papers: 1 copy \$1; 2-3 copies \$1.45; 4-5 copies \$2.45)

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## SEPTEMBER NOTICES

**1 SEPTEMBER. SCREENING: SOPHIE SCHOLL – EDMUND RICE CENTRE'S JUSTFILM PROGRAM (NSW).** 'Sophie Scholl' is a film about resistance to the Nazis in the Second World War. Not to be missed! More information about the film can be found at [www.sophieschollmovie.com](http://www.sophieschollmovie.com). Tickets \$15. 7.00 pm, Dendy Newtown Cinema, 261–263 King Street, Newtown. Bookings: (02) 9550 5699. Web:

<http://www.erc.org.au/index.php?module=calendar&module=calendar&calendar%5bview%5d=event&id=17>

**1 SEPTEMBER. ADDRESS: WAR IN THE MIDDLE EAST: A SYRIAN PERSPECTIVE (NSW).** Given by H.E. Mr. Tammam Sulaiman, Ambassador of the Syrian Arab Republic. Generously supported by University of Sydney, Government and International Relations. Refreshments will be served from 5:30. Admission by donation; free for students. 5:30pm - 7:00pm in the Conference Room, The Darlington Centre (south of the Merewether Building, next to the Institute Building on City Road, Darlington, on the King St side). Web: <http://db.auth.usyd.edu.au/directories/map/building.stm?location=17P>.

**2 SEPTEMBER. ANNUAL GATHERING, JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMISSION (QLD).** The commission will focus on reconciliation and Indigenous justice. Guest speaker will be Mr Les Malezer, Chairman of the Foundation for Aboriginal and Islander Research Action (FAIRA). 10.00 am, Aspinall Centre, St Bernard's Parish, Klumpp Road, Upper Mt Gravatt. Bookings essential. Contact: (07) 3336 9173, (07) 3336 9351 or 0409 265 476.

**2 SEPTEMBER. CATHOLIC CHURCH TELEVISION SCREENS 'ALL GOD'S BEGGARS'.** This documentary, made with the assistance of the Asylum Seeker Centre in Sydney and Dandenong, Good Shepherd Sisters, the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre in Melbourne, the Christian Brothers, Actors for Refugees, the Brigidine Asylum Seekers Project and Jesuit Refugee Service, reflects on the effects of government policy on asylum seekers. 2.00 pm, Catholic Church TV, Aurora Channel, Foxtel Digital.

**3 SEPTEMBER. ABC TV SCREENS 'SILMA'S SCHOOL'.** Standing ovation, Sydney Film Festival; Finalist, New York International Television Award. 'An inspiring story of an under-dog's battle to survive and a fascinating insight into Islamic culture and issues as they play out in the Australian suburbs'. 10.05 pm, Compass, ABC TV.

**3 SEPTEMBER. LECTURE – NAMING IT: EMERGING RACISMS IN AUSTRALIA (VIC).** Given by Dr. Hurriyet Babacan (Associate Director, Centre for Multicultural and Community Development, University of the Sunshine Coast); presented by B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation Commission and the Jewish Community Council of Victoria. Booking recommended: tickets also available at the door. Tickets \$10 (includes delicious High Tea). 5.00pm, B'nai B'rith House, 99 Hotham Street, East St Kilda. Enquiries/Ticket Bookings: Tel: 9572 5770, Fax: 9572 5775, Email: [reception@antidef.org.au](mailto:reception@antidef.org.au). Web: <http://www.bnaibrith.org.au/index.asp?pRef=AntiDefamationCommission>.

**4 SEPTEMBER. SCREENING OF DVD AND TALK BY FR CHARLES RUE (VIC).** Charles Rue SSC speaks on genetically modified food. 6.00 pm The Parish Hall, Swanston St., St Marys. RSVP: (03) 8838 3413. Web: <http://www.sosj.org.au/justice/events.html>

**5 SEPTEMBER. PUBLIC LECTURE – GENOCIDE IN DARFUR: 'EVIDENCE, ACTION AND EDUCATION' (VIC).** Speaker: Dr Samuel Totten, former investigator, US State Department's Darfur Atrocities Documentation Team. 4.30 pm – 6.00 pm, Room 915, Level 9, Victoria University, 300 Flinders Street, Melbourne. RSVP: (03) 9919 4455; email [icepa@vu.edu.au](mailto:icepa@vu.edu.au).

**5 SEPTEMBER. SPIRITUALITY IN THE PUB – 'THE POOR IN SPIRIT' (SA).** Speakers: Nicholas Kerr and Penny O'Hare. Stanley Bridge Tavern, Onkaparinga Road, Verdun SA. Enquiries: (08) 8388 5957. Web: <http://www.catalyst-for-renewal.com.au/news.htm>.

**5 SEPTEMBER. FORUM: CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS GROWING PEACE IN AUBURN (NSW).** This forum, to promote peace and mutual understanding among people, is an initiative of the Columban Mission Institute Centres for Christian-Muslim Relations and Peace and for Ecology and Justice, in partnership with the Affinity Intercultural Foundation and Auburn Council. 6.45 pm for 7.00 pm, Auburn Town Hall, 1 Susan St, Auburn. Information: (02) 9352 8021 or (02) 9735 1288.

**6 SEPTEMBER. FORUM – HUMAN TRAFFICKING: DOES THIS HAPPEN IN MELBOURNE? (VIC).** Speakers: His Honour Judge Michael McInerney; Valli Mendez (Acting co-ordinator; Project Respect); Monica Weedon FMDM; Christine Carolan (Co-ordinator of Good Shepherd Social Network). Supper provided: gold coin donation to support the work of the Good Shepherd Social Network. 8.00pm. Mary Immaculate Hall, 4 Waverley Avenue, Ivanhoe. Contact: (03) 9499 1011, (03) 9499 7390. Web: <http://www.sosj.org.au/justice/events.html>

**7 SEPTEMBER. AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESENTS A DARFUR AWARENESS EVENING (NSW).** In association with Blacktown Migrant Resource Centre. Speakers: Irene Ross (manager, Blacktown Migrant resource centre); Reverend Bernard Suwa (author and pastor to Sudanese refugees in Uganda), Geoffrey Mangwi-Mugi, (lawyer working with Sudanese refugees in Uganda). Songs performed by Mary Mamour. 6.30 – 7.30 pm, Parramatta Town Hall, Church St Mall, Parramatta. Contact (02) 9217 7670; email [nswaia@amnesty.org.au](mailto:nswaia@amnesty.org.au); web <http://nsw.amnesty.org.au>

**7 SEPTEMBER. SCREENING OF 'SCARED SACRED' (VIC).** In support of Union Aid Abroad — APHEDA (the overseas aid arm of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, working in developing countries in the areas of education, health, skills training and strengthening of workers' rights). \$20.00/\$15.00 (concession). Bookings essential. 7.00 pm, Cinema Nova, 380 Lygon St, Carlton, Vic. Contact: (03) 9659 3592. Email: [cchew@vthc.org.au](mailto:cchew@vthc.org.au). Web: [http://www.melbourne.indymedia.org/calendar/event\\_display\\_detail.php?event\\_id=3506&day=7&month=9&year=2006](http://www.melbourne.indymedia.org/calendar/event_display_detail.php?event_id=3506&day=7&month=9&year=2006)

**7 SEPTEMBER. DISCUSSION: 'MY ISRAEL' QUESTION BY ANTONY LOEWENSTEIN (NSW).** Panel: Prof. Stuart Rees, Prof Ahmad Shboul, Elisabeth Wynhausen and Antony Loewenstein. 6.30 for 7pm. Gleebooks, 49 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe. \$9/\$6. Ph (02) 9660 2333.

**8 SEPTEMBER. SCREENING OF 'AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH', PRESENTED BY SENATOR CHRISTINE MILNE (TAS).** Al Gore's remarkable film about global warming. Seat reservations are required. \$12.00. 6.30 – 10.00 pm, Village Cinema, Hobart. RSVP (03) 6234 4566; email [senator.milne@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.milne@aph.gov.au). Web: <http://www.tasmedia.org>.

**8 SEPTEMBER. THE 2006 AQUINAS LECTURE: 'ETHICS SANS FRONTIERS: THE VOCATION OF GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP' (QLD).** Presented by the Australian Catholic University. Delivered by Professor Noel Preston, Adjunct Professor in Ethics, Law, Justice and Governance. Free. 6.00 pm, Brisbane Campus (McAuley at Banyo): 1100 Nudgee Road, Banyo, Qld. Tel: (07) 3623 7422; email [melinda.scott@acu.edu.au](mailto:melinda.scott@acu.edu.au); web: [http://www.acu.edu.au/acu\\_national/News\\_\\_\\_Events\\_Calendar/Events.cfm](http://www.acu.edu.au/acu_national/News___Events_Calendar/Events.cfm).

**9 SEPTEMBER. CATHOLIC CHURCH TELEVISION SCREENS 'ME AND A CAMERA + 70 MILLION LOCALS'.** This film makes the journey with a group of Catholic secondary students as they expose themselves to poverty in the Philippines, and to the reality of most people's lives in the world. 1.30 pm, Catholic Church TV, Aurora Channel, Foxtel Digital.

**11 SEPTEMBER. SPIRITUALITY IN THE PUB, JAMBEROO (NSW).** 'Dare to Dream and Dare to Live - Working Together for the Common Good' Speakers: Colleen Malone and Rev Bill Crews. 7.30 pm The Jamberoo Hotel, 12 Allowrie Street, Jamberoo. Information: (02) 4232 2735. Web: <http://www.catalyst-for-renewal.com.au/news.htm>.

**12 SEPTEMBER. DINNER TO WELCOME FR FREDDIE D'SOUZA, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, CARITAS INDIA (NSW).** Hosted by the Edmund Rice Centre. 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm, NSW Leagues Club, Level 2, 165 Phillip St Sydney. \$45 a head (\$35 concession). RSVP by 5th September. Ph. 0421 284 610 or email [michael@erc.org.au](mailto:michael@erc.org.au). Payment at the door.

**13 SEPTEMBER. FUND-RAINING LUNCH FOR BRIDGE FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS (NSW).** Dishes from the Campania region (around Naples) created by award-winning chef, Aurelio Spagnuolo. Guest speaker: food writer and critic John Newton. Music by acoustic vocal trio Touchwood. 12.00 noon: Osteria dei Poeti, 73 Glebe Point Rd Glebe 2037. More information: Phone (02) 9810 5826; email: [mail@ajustaustralia.com](mailto:mail@ajustaustralia.com); Web: [http://www.ajustaustralia.com/whats happening\\_events\\_view.php?id=669A6595-FF0E-E42E-C24CF CDC0F08352B](http://www.ajustaustralia.com/whats happening_events_view.php?id=669A6595-FF0E-E42E-C24CF CDC0F08352B).

**13 SEPTEMBER. THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME PRESENTS THE PHILIP NERI LECTURE (NSW).** 'Globalisation and its impact on the poor', given by Dr Freddy D'Souza (Deputy Director of Caritas India). 7.00 pm, St Benedict's Hall, cnr Abercrombie St and Broadway, Chippendale. Admission: \$10.00. Contact: Phone (02) 8204 4411; email [acrook@nd.edu.au](mailto:acrook@nd.edu.au).

**14 SEPTEMBER. PRESENTATION, 'UNJUST GENES, LIFE & DEATH FOR SALE' (NSW).** In association with the Sydney Archdiocesan Justice and Peace office, Fr Charles Rue of the Columban Mission Society will host a session providing a range of views and perspectives regarding genetically engineered food. There will be a presentation of the new DVD 'Unjust Genes'. 5.30pm, Level 5 in the Clancy Room of the Polding Centre, 133 Liverpool Street, Sydney. RSVP by Monday 11 September on (02) 9390 5319 or email [japp@sydney.catholic.org.au](mailto:japp@sydney.catholic.org.au)

**15 SEPTEMBER. FORUM: TOWARDS A COHESIVE AUSTRALIA (NSW).** Speakers: The Hon Tony Abbott MP (Federal Minister for Health and Ageing), Sheikh Taj Din Al Hilaly (Mufti of Australia), Cardinal Edward Cassidy, Ms Nadia Jamal (journalist and author). Chaired by Sr Libby Rogerson, Social Justice Co-ordinator, Diocese of Parramatta. Welcome from Bishop Kevin Manning. 7.30 pm, Dooleys Lidcombe Catholic Club, 24 John Street, Lidcombe. Information: 0402 964 662, 0410 336 922, (02) 9683 6277.

**15 SEPTEMBER. POLITICS IN THE PUB: MIDDLE EAST INJUSTICES – NON VIOLENT SOLUTIONS? (NSW)** Speakers: Prof Ahmad Shboul, Arabic & Islamic Studies, University of Sydney; Vivienne Porzolt, Member of Jews against the Occupation, Sydney. 6pm until 7:45, The Gaelic Club, Level 1, 64 Devonshire St., Surry Hills (across from Chalmers St exit and Devonshire St tunnel at Central Station). Web: <http://www.politicsinthepub.org>

**15 SEPTEMBER. ASYLUM SEEKER SYMPOSIUM – CURTIN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY (VIC).** Convened by the Centre for Applied Social Research (CASR) RMIT University and the Centre for Human Rights Education (CHRE), Curtin University of Technology. 9.30 am to 5.00 pm, RMIT University Function Room (Building 8, Level 2, Swanston Street, Melbourne). Enquiries: Phone (03) 9925 9741; email [alperhan.babacan@rmit.edu.au](mailto:alperhan.babacan@rmit.edu.au); Web: <http://www.rmit.edu.au/browse:ID=smkmtc9jk6>

**16 SEPTEMBER. CATHOLIC CHURCH TELEVISION SCREENS 'EL SALVADOR: THE SEEDS OF LIBERTY'.** This week, El Salvador celebrates its national independence day. In this film we see the story of how in 1980, soldiers in El Salvador murdered four American women, three nuns and a lay volunteer, who lived and worked among the country's poor. Their stand for justice sowed seeds of the freedom El Salvador is enjoying today. 2.00 pm, Catholic Church TV, Aurora Channel, Foxtel Digital.

**17 SEPTEMBER. SPIRITUALITY IN THE PUB, ENGADINE (NSW).** 'How well do we the church build freedom in these times through: pursuing truth, acting justly, loving whole heartedly?' Speakers: Sr Patty Faulkner & Michael Costigan. 7.30 pm, Sutherland RSL Club. Enquiries: (02) 9520 0617 or (02) 9548 2475. Web: <http://www.catalyst-for-renewal.com.au/news.htm>.

**18 SEPTEMBER. SPIRITUALITY IN THE PUB, NORTH SYDNEY (NSW).** 'Seeking harmony between all people' Speakers: Anthony Renshaw & tba. 7.30 pm. Union Hotel, Pacific Highway & West Street, North Sydney. Enquiries: (02) 9958 5963. Web: <http://www.catalyst-for-renewal.com.au/news.htm>.

**20 SEPTEMBER. THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB OF AUSTRALIA PRESENTS 'GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND HOMEGROWN EXTREMISM: A CRISIS OF COMPLACENCY' (ACT).** An address by HE Rt Hon. Helen Liddell, British High Commissioner. Members \$45.00; Guests \$59; Student members \$35 (prices include GST). 11.45 am–1.30 pm, National Room, 16 National Circuit, Barton, ACT. Enquiries: Phone (02) 6121 2199; email [npc@npc.org.au](mailto:npc@npc.org.au); Web [www.npc.org.au](http://www.npc.org.au).

**20 SEPTEMBER. ETHICS – THE PRACTICAL REALITIES – BREAKFAST WITH THE EDMUND RICE CENTRE (NSW).** Join in a conversation led by Howard Harrison, a partner in leading law firm Carroll & O'Dea. \$45 (incl. GST); Members: \$35; Student groups: negotiable. 7:00am - 9:00am Dooley's Lidcombe Catholic Club, John Street, Lidcombe (enter via Church Street). Enquiries Ph: 9701 4304; email: [marisab@erc.org.au](mailto:marisab@erc.org.au). Web: [www.erc.org.au](http://www.erc.org.au)

**23 SEPTEMBER. CATHOLIC CHURCH TELEVISION SCREENS 'THE VANISHING GARDEN'.** This film looks at how the Book of Genesis and the Letters of St Paul speak about our need to be good stewards of creation, and care for the earth. This week as Australia focuses on World Clean Day, it's timely for us to look at the spiritual and moral dimensions to our vanishing garden. 1.30 pm, Catholic Church TV, Aurora Channel, Foxtel Digital.

**25 SEPTEMBER. INFORMATION EVENING ON THE WORK OF THE EDMUND RICE CENTRE (WA).** Learn about the work of the Edmund Rice Centre in Fremantle and how to become involved. 5.30 pm for 6.00 – 7.30 pm,

Edmund Rice Centre for Social Justice, 24 High St, Fremantle. Registration: Tel (08) 9335 4353, fax: (08) 9336 2146 or email [erc@powerdsl.com.au](mailto:erc@powerdsl.com.au). Web: [www.ercfremantle.org.au](http://www.ercfremantle.org.au).

**28–29 SEPTEMBER. CONFERENCE – 'EVERYDAY MULTICULTURALISM' (NSW).** Presented by Macquarie University's Centre for Research on Social Inclusion and the ARC Cultural Research Network. Keynote speakers: Professor Ien Ang (ARC Professorial Fellow, Centre for Cultural Research, University of Western Sydney), Dr Greg Noble (School of Humanities and Languages, University of Western Sydney). Macquarie Graduate School of Management, 99 Talavera Road, Macquarie Park, North Ryde, Sydney. \$120 or \$60 single day rate. Enquiries: Tel (02) 9850 9171; Email [crsi@scmp.mq.edu.au](mailto:crsi@scmp.mq.edu.au); Web: [http://www.crsi.mq.edu.au/news\\_and\\_events/everyday\\_multiculturalism.htm#contacts](http://www.crsi.mq.edu.au/news_and_events/everyday_multiculturalism.htm#contacts).

**30 SEPTEMBER. CATHOLIC CHURCH TELEVISION SCREENS 'SECRET PRIESTS'.** This week is the feast of St Wenceslas, patron of the Czech Republic. During the communist rule, the Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia had to become an underground church. In this film we see the religious context from which many people fled as they made their way to Australia. 2.00 pm, Catholic Church TV, Aurora Channel, Foxtel Digital.

**1 OCTOBER – 14 OCTOBER. EDMUND RICE CENTRE IMMERSION PROGRAM – INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIA (BROOME, WA).** A model of active citizenship that allows participants to learn through 'experiential learning' what it means to be part of a global humanity. Cost: \$1800. Information and application forms are available at [www.ercfremantle.org](http://www.ercfremantle.org).

**4 OCTOBER. DINNER AND ADDRESS: STOLEN WAGES IN AUSTRALIA AND THE USA (QLD).** Speakers: Elouise Cobell (Blackfeet tribe, Montana, USA) and Viola Sheridan (a Gangulu woman) share their experiences of fighting to get back stolen wages and trust fund monies. 5:45 pm for Dinner 6:30 pm. Riverside Receptions, 50 Oxlade Drive, New Farm. Enquiries: email [events@antarqld.org.au](mailto:events@antarqld.org.au). Web: [http://antarqld.org.au/webcalendar/view\\_entry.php?id=82&date=20061004](http://antarqld.org.au/webcalendar/view_entry.php?id=82&date=20061004).

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

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## AUGUST NEWS MONITOR

**JOHN PAUL'S 1986 INDIGENOUS MESSAGE STILL CHALLENGES:** John Paul II's 1986 statement to Indigenous people at Alice Springs 'was more radical than anything he said about land rights,' human rights advocate Fr Frank Brennan said, as the Message Stick marking the 20th anniversary of the late Pontiff's visit completed its Queensland journey.

**INTERNATIONAL AWARD FOR JESUIT SOCIAL SERVICES:** Melbourne's Jesuit Social Services was announced as an 'honoree' in a New York-based international award for enterprises which integrate high ethical standards with spiritual values.

**PAX CHRISTI HELPS NEGOTIATE UGANDAN CEASEFIRE:** In a major breakthrough for Uganda, a cessation of hostilities was agreed between the Government and rebel Lord's Resistance Army following peace talks assisted by the Catholic peace movement Pax Christi.

**CHURCH GROUPS HYPOCRITICAL OVER WELFARE-TO-WORK, LOBBYIST SAYS:** A lobbyist has slammed Catholic Social Services and described the St Vincent de Paul Society as 'hardline' for boycotting the Government's new welfare-to-work measures, saying it is 'hypocritical' to appeal to a higher morality while also relying on government funding for much of their income.

**SRI LANKAN PRIEST DISAPPEARS AS CIVILIAN TOLL MOUNTS:** As fighting intensified between the Liberation Tigers and Sri Lankan Government forces, a Catholic priest who witnessed an attack by government troops on his parish church has disappeared.

**TOOWOOMBA BISHOP CONCERNED ABOUT REGIONAL MIGRANTS' RIGHTS:** In a statement for Refugee and Migrant Sunday, Toowoomba's Bishop William Morris has called for greater rights and support for Toowoomba's migrant workers arriving in Australia on temporary work visas.

**CATHOLIC AGENCIES HIT BACK AT GOVT OVER WELFARE-TO-WORK:** Two major Catholic welfare agencies have hit back at Federal Government criticism over the agencies' refusal to participate in its welfare breaching program as the Hillsong Church makes known its own reservations about the new system.

**RWANDAN REFUGEE FAMILY FIND SANCTUARY IN SYDNEY:** The Sanctuary Movement, a refugee support group founded by Catholic parishes on Sydney's north shore, raised enough money to reunite a Rwandan refugee who now works at the Australian Catholic University with his surviving wife and children after seven years of separation.

**TIME FOR HICKS TO GO HOME, SAYS BISHOP:** It is time for the Government to increase efforts to secure a resolution to the case of Australian Guantanamo prisoner David Hicks, said Bishop Christopher Saunders, the chairman of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council.

**MERCY'S JUSTICE TREE SPREADS BRANCHES, DEEPENS ROOTS:** While passing the baton to a new set of leaders, an Adelaide group of students who launched a senior high school group known as the Young Mercy Justice Tree in 2005 have opted to continue their commitment by linking up with a Mercy International Justice Network project in the Philippines.

**FATE OF BALI BOMBERS RAISES HOPE FOR THREE CONDEMNED INDONESIAN CATHOLICS:** With the postponement of the execution of three Bali bombers, a Vatican diplomat said that hopes have risen for a further postponement of the execution of the three Indonesians Catholics convicted for their part in sectarian clashes in Sulawesi in 2000.

**CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES CHALLENGES LABOR ON COMMITMENT TO POOR:** Welcoming the establishment the Labor Party's 'Family Watch Task Force,' Catholic Social Services Director Frank Quinlan told the Party that it has a 'unique opportunity to renew its traditional commitment to those who are most in need.'

**ANGLICANS BACK CATHOLIC BOYCOTT OF 'UNJUST' WELFARE-TO-WORK PROGRAM:** Anglicare joined Catholic Social Services in its refusal to take part in the Government's case management program for 'breached' welfare recipients, leaving Centrelink to manage the household budgets of thousands of welfare recipients.

**CATHOLIC SOCIAL SERVICES QUILTS GOVT'S 'IMMORAL' PROGRAM:** Catholic Social Services recommended that its 60 member bodies not participate in the Government's new welfare-to-work program for people whose welfare payments have been cut off, saying the program is contrary Catholic social teaching.

**TOWNSVILLE'S \$200,000-A-DAY POKIE HABIT WORRIES CENTACARE:** Women now make up 50% of problem gamblers while young men aged between 25 and 34 are emerging as a high risk group for gambling, the head of Townsville's Centacare said, commenting on the latest Queensland gambling statistics for the twin cities of Townsville and Thuringowa.

**FISH KILL CONFIRMED NEAR AUSTRALIAN MINE IN PHILIPPINES, PRIEST DENIES SABOTAGE:** A local priest denied allegations of sabotage as local government officials confirmed a recent fish kill near the site of an Australian majority owned mine on the central Philippines island of Rapu-Rapu.

**'BIG PEOPLE' MUST RECONCILE, SAY DISPLACED TIMORESE:** With 100,000 East Timorese still in camps four months after the end of the recent violence, a Catholic camp coordinator, Br Adriano de Jesus, said that the country's leaders must set an example in dialogue 'because they are the ones who created this problem.'

**OCEANIA BISHOPS VOICE CONCERN ON CLIMATE CHANGE, AIDS:** Youth, pastoral care in remote areas, AIDS and climate change were among the key concerns addressed by the Federation of Oceania Bishops Conferences assembly which also elected Wollongong bishop Peter Ingham as Federation President in Fiji.

**BISHOP GRECH WELCOMES DEFEAT OF ASYLUM AMENDMENT PLANS:** Sandhurst Bishop Joe Grech welcomed the Government's withdrawal of plans for tougher new asylum laws while the Edmund Rice Centre's Phil Glendenning called for a 'mature' debate on asylum seeker issues, 'free from the fear and insecurities associated with terrorism and national security.'

**KILLED ASYLUM SEEKER DETAILS SENT TO DIMA:** Relatives have granted permission for the Edmund Rice Centre to send to the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs the names of two Afghani asylum seekers and three children who have been killed since their involuntary return from Nauru.

**OFF-SHORE PROCESSING FAILED DEAD ASYLUM SEEKERS: EDMUND RICE:** Afghani asylum seekers detained on Nauru were told Afghanistan was safe and that if they did not leave voluntarily they would likely face forced deportation later, Phil Glendenning, director of Edmund Rice Centre said rejecting a denial of Government responsibility by Immigration Minister, Amanda Vanstone.

**BERTONE SLAMS IMF AND WORLD BANK 'USURY':** In a hard-hitting interview with an Italian magazine, the Holy See's incoming secretary of state Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone described World Bank and International Monetary Fund loans to developing countries as 'usury.'

**BISHOP'S COMMENTS AT CENTRE OF IR TUG-OF-WAR:** Reacting to a statement by Parramatta Bishop Kevin Manning who said that the WorkChoices legislation violates Catholic social teaching on the option for the poor, Prime Minister John Howard said that even a Catholic bishop does not speak for all Catholics.

**NINE REJECTED ASYLUM SEEKERS KILLED: EDMUND RICE CENTRE:** Researchers at the Edmund Rice Centre have identified nine asylum seekers forcibly repatriated by the Australian government to Afghanistan who were killed upon their return.

**INDIGENOUS FRESH FOOD SUBSIDIES NEEDED, JOSEPHITE SAID:** Junk food, which is cheaper than fruit and vegetables in many remote communities, is causing concern among Indigenous women who want more affordable fresh food for their children, said Josephite Sr Joan Healy.

*- courtesy Church Resources' CathNews, stories in detail at <http://www.cathnews.com/news/608>*

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## SEPTEMBER SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR

### SEPTEMBER 2 COUNCIL FOR ABORIGINAL RECONCILIATION ACT

Reconciliation is based on Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians coming to an honest understanding of our shared history, a commitment to building cooperative partnerships based on trust and respect and a recognition of the distinctive rights of Indigenous peoples. The formal reconciliation process started in 1991 with the establishment of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation. Ten years later the Council presented the Federal Government with a Roadmap to Reconciliation and Final Report to Parliament, which contained a comprehensive set of practical and symbolic steps to be taken. Corroboree 2000 was the celebration for National Reconciliation Week in 2000. Events included the Walk for Reconciliation across the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the production of a Draft Document for Reconciliation.

Reconciliation Australia is the body established to provide a continuing national focus for reconciliation following the end of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation in December 2000. For more information:  
[www.reconciliationaustralia.org](http://www.reconciliationaustralia.org)

Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation is an independent, national network of mainly non-Indigenous organisations and individuals working in support of justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia. It coordinates a major community education and awareness campaign on native title and reconciliation. Central to ANTaR's activities is the Sea of Hands. Over 300,000 Australians have put their signatures on a hand in the Sea of Hands and helped in its installation in locations around Australia. For more information:  
[www.antar.org.au](http://www.antar.org.au)

### Prayer for Reconciliation

*In the midst of conflict and division,  
We know it is you  
Who turns our minds to thoughts of peace.  
Your spirit changes our hearts:  
Enemies begin to speak to one another,  
Those who were estranged join hands in friendship,  
And nations seek the way of peace together.  
Let your spirit be at work in us.  
Give us understanding and put an end to strife,  
Fill us with mercy and overcome our denial,  
Grant us wisdom and teach us to learn  
From the people of the land.  
Call us to justice.*

- ACSJC Prayer Card

### SEPTEMBER 24 SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY

2006 is the 20th anniversary of Pope John Paul II's visit to Alice Springs and his address to Indigenous Australians. To commemorate this event, the Social Justice Sunday Statement 2006 focuses on social justice for Indigenous Australians.

## **SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS**

Indigenous People all over the world are often among the most disadvantaged of their lands, experiencing discrimination and marginalisation on the basis of their identity. Social justice means making sure that every person has choices about how they live, and the means to make those choices. In Australia, social justice also means recognising the distinctive rights that Indigenous Australians hold as the original peoples of this land.

It has long been recognised that the health, living conditions, educational standards and employment prospects of Indigenous Australians are generally much poorer than those of other Australians. The numerous statistics and reports highlight this reality, but do little to address it. Extreme inequality within Australia is one of the main barriers to human development and dignity for our Indigenous sisters and brothers. A life of opportunity and dignity, free from discrimination and disadvantage, is not just an ideal, but a basic human right for every Australian.

Social justice is what faces you in the morning. It is awakening in a house with an adequate water supply, cooking facilities and sanitation. It is the ability to nourish your children and send them to a school where their education not only equips them for employment but also reinforces their knowledge and appreciation of their cultural inheritance. It is the prospect of genuine employment and good health: a life of choice and opportunity free from discrimination.

*- Mick Dodson, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commission Report, 1993*

## **PRAYER**

*God of yesterday, today and tomorrow,  
we call to mind your presence within us and around us.  
Teach us to live our lives  
free from assumptions by others about what is best for us,  
and free from assumptions about what is best for others.  
Help us to recognise and respect the values, culture and traditions  
of our Indigenous sisters and brothers,  
so that we can co-exist in peace and love  
and celebrate our diversity.  
We pray in the name of Jesus, your Son. Amen*

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**AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC SOCIAL JUSTICE COUNCIL** Leo XIII House, 19 MacKenzie Street, PO Box 1615, North Sydney NSW 2059. Tel: (02) 9956 5811, Fax: (02) 9954 0056, Email: [admin@acsjc.org.au](mailto: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.