



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

THE PRESIDENT

4 July 2019

Social Justice Statement 2019–2020 ***Making it Real: Genuine human encounter in our digital world***

Social Justice Sunday will be celebrated this year on 29 September. I am writing to inform you about the Catholic Bishops' Social Justice Statement and how you can access it.

The 2019–2020 Statement, titled *Making it Real: Genuine human encounter in our digital world*, considers the great changes that modern communications technology has brought to our lives. It has revolutionised the way we communicate, work and learn, do business and socialise. Here in Australia over 20 million people are on the internet and 18 million are using social media. For us as Church, there are so many new opportunities to share the Good News of Christ, to bring communities together and to reach out to people in need.

For all these advances, however, there are some serious challenges. The Statement highlights how the dignity of vulnerable people is harmed by online bullying and exploitation. The common good is compromised where certain groups are excluded from the benefits of technology. People's privacy has been undermined when personal data has been appropriated for financial gain. The solidarity of entire communities can be placed at risk by campaigns of misinformation and the spread of 'fake news'.

Pope Francis is calling us to 'boldly become citizens of the digital world' and to ensure it is a place of genuine human encounter. We all have a role in making this new digital world one where hatred and divisions are rejected and our love of God and neighbour is fostered always.

The Statement will be launched in early September. For your convenience, and to improve efficiency, we are now offering online ordering. You can pre-order the Statement now at bit.ly/socialjusticeshop. Alternatively, you can use the attached order form if you would prefer to place your order through the Office for Social Justice. In the attached summary sheet there is a suggested notice that can be used by parishes, schools and groups as Social Justice Sunday approaches.

I commend this Statement to every parish, school and Church network and invite you to promote it as widely as possible.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

✠ Mark Coleridge
Archbishop of Brisbane
President

Encl.