



messenger

"If you want peace, work for justice."
POPE PAUL VI

of hope

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• celebrating • diversity

"A Generous Heart in the Love of Christ: Challenging Racism in Australia Today."

Pope John Paul II urges us to seek "a relationship of openness and dialogue with the followers of other religions. This dialogue must continue. This dialogue will be especially important in establishing a sure basis for peace and warding off the dread spectre of those wars of religion which have so often bloodied human history. The name of the one God must become increasingly what it is: a name of peace and a summons to peace".

Novo Millennio Ineunte, At the Beginning of the New Millennium, Pope John Paul II

In the lead up to Social Justice Sunday on 28 September, former Governor-General Sir William Deane launched the statement "Challenging Racism in Australia Today" prepared by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.

Bishop Saunders of Broome, Chairman of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council said that the statement noted the widespread racial hostility present in Australian society but gives "positive and helpful advice based on the stories and actions of Jesus who meets strangers, looks into their faces, engages them in conversation and reveals a God who loves all human beings."

In celebrating multiculturalism, the statement calls us to address racism in Australia, "expressed most clearly in a hostile attitude to refugees and asylum seekers" resulting in the unjust policy of mandatory detention and the incarceration of children, observed the Bishops.

The statement explains that in today's global climate of anxiety about border security and terrorism, it is tempting to find scapegoats to blame. The events of September 11, military action in Afghanistan and Iraq and the bombing of Bali have sadly made Arab and Muslim communities in Australia easy targets.

The Bishops' state "to be rejected is bad enough if we have done something wrong. But it is even more bitter if we are excluded simply because of our religion, our birthplace, our colour, our race."

Social Justice Sunday calls for racial justice

"We seek a community in which strangers are welcomed and differences celebrated; we seek a society where the systems, structures and policies of governments and institutions are racially inclusive; and we seek a country in which all people are valued and can worship according to their own faith".

"A call for racial justice", Subverting Racism 2003 resource kit, Social Justice Sunday.

editorial

Be doers, not only hearers of the word. Jas 1:22-27

The Messenger of Hope is a joint publication of the Catholic Commission for Justice, Development and Peace (CCJDP), Caritas Melbourne, Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Melbourne (ACMM) and the Melbourne Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office (MCMRO). Messenger of Hope helps raise awareness on social justice issues and aims to empower the Catholic community to work towards a just and inclusive community.

WHO WE ARE

CCJDP works for justice at both a local and national level on issues of Refugees and Asylum Seekers, Globalisation, Reconciliation and Human Rights. CCJDP seeks to do this through research, lobbying Government and sharing information at public forums, parish networks and to the media.

Caritas Australia is the Catholic agency for overseas aid and development working to help people help themselves. It helps to raise awareness that the Federal Government needs to lift Australia's level of aid from its lowest level ever (0.25% of GDP).

Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Melbourne seeks to provide a forum for Aboriginal Catholics to come together to explore their spiritual needs and other issues affecting the Aboriginal community. It supports the rekindling of the Reconciliation process.

Melbourne Catholic Refugee and Migrant Office is concerned with the practical pastoral care of migrants and refugees (including people seeking asylum) and seeks an end to the incarceration of children.

Please contact us for support in starting your own parish social justice group or for further information or speakers on social justice issues. Contact details appear on page 4.

REGINA LANE EDITOR

1. Get informed!

Download the National Council of Churches ecumenical resource kit for Social Justice Sunday. The title is Subverting Racism and can be found at www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au

2. Welcome the Stranger

Approach the newcomer to your school, parish, and workplace and make them feel welcome.

3. Become Action-Oriented

Identify and address racism in the organisations to which you belong. Respond to racist language and discrimination. Write letters to editors drawing attention to racist policy.

4. Challenge Structural Racism

Evaluate the organisation of the workplace, parish, neighbourhood or school you participate in to discover where racism and inequality fester. Try to understand and address the reasons for them and devise new processes to address structural change.

5. Surf the Net

Get online to find educational and resource kits, activities and articles to help you to combat racism.

- Racism. No way! Full of resource kits for school communities. www.racismnoway.com.au
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission www.humanrights.gov.au
- Reconciliation Australia www.reconciliationaustralia.org.au

6. Respect others Beliefs and Cultures

The diversity of culture in Australia offers a great variety of ideas, opinions and experiences. Listen to and respect the different beliefs, opinions and stories of others.

7. Watch our Language

Be aware of the language we use. How might people from other backgrounds receive it? Respond to racist remarks and discrimination when it happens in conversation or in the media.

8. Enjoy and Contribute to Australia's Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism allows us to enjoy a wonderful array of cultural traditions and practises. Join in the ethnic celebrations and festivals around you.

Ensure that your local parish or school celebrates:

- Reconciliation Week (May 27 to June 3)
- Aboriginal Sunday and NAIDOC week (early July)
- Refugee and Migrant Sunday (late August)

9. Prayer

In parishes and schools, provide opportunities for hymns and prayers of other nations to be included in liturgies and prayer services. Pray for those who are the targets of racism and also those who perpetrate it.

10. Recognise Difference as a Gift

Celebrate difference! Recognise the contribution people from other cultures make to Australia. The different cultures, religions, languages and nationalities that make up Australia enrich us all, building our nation, widening our worldviews and shaping our relationships.

let our friends stay!

Rahmat loves to write. He has always wanted to become a journalist so that he can tell the world of the struggles of his country. For now, he has to be content travelling around Victoria sharing his story and the story of the Hazara people of Afghanistan.

Rahmat recently spent a weekend with twenty refugees from the Sudan, Sri Lanka, Iraq and Afghanistan speaking in community halls, schools and churches as part of the Hotham Mission's *Journey on the Wind* program.

"I wanted people to understand why I came here, I wanted them to understand the problems facing the Hazara people. *Journey on the Wind* allowed me to share my story and learn others too".

Rahmat arrived in Australia in 2000 on a boat after fleeing Afghanistan. He was taken to Woomera Detention Centre, an experience he says he'll never forget. "When I first saw the centre, I felt like a criminal, because they were locking me up in a jail. It was very sad in there...many people were depressed".

Granted refugee status after four months in detention, Rahmat ended up in the Dandenong region after a long and tedious search for work. At 22, Rahmat would like to study, but his Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) poses too many barriers. As a TPV holder, Rahmat is unable to access Federal Government English tuition and his hopes of further education are dashed by the imposition of full fees.

Rahmat also lives with the very real prospect of being sent back to Afghanistan where his future is uncertain so earning money in Australia must be his first priority to survive back home.

Rahmat is not alone. By the end of this year, 2,200 TPV's will expire and many holders are awaiting notice that they are to be sent back to countries such as Afghanistan and Iraq.

Even though these people have been recognised as refugees by the Government under the United Nations definitions, the Australian Government contends that as these are no longer conflict zones, it is ok to send such people back.

However, the Governments own Travel Advice contradicts its position towards refugees. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade website says in reference to Afghanistan: "The security situation in Afghanistan remains very uncertain outside Kabul...there is the added danger that some Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters remain in parts of the country thereby creating a significant security risk".

The Catholic Commission for Justice, Development and Peace in conjunction with Oxfam Community Aid Abroad have launched an urgent letter writing campaign to ALP and Government MP's to urge them to recognise that these people are determined to be 'genuine refugees' by the Australian Government and as such should have permanent protection rights.

Join the campaign to allow people like Rahmat to a safe and secure future and write to your local Federal member. Check out Community Aid Abroad's website:

www.caa.org.au/campaigns/urgent/tpvs or CCJDP's website: www.ccjdp.org

2003 Rerum Novarum Social Justice Lecture

Between Anguish and Hope: A World of Refugees

Fr Mark Raper SJ
Provincial of The Society of Jesus (Jesuits) & former International Director of Jesuit Refugee Service

Wednesday 22 October 7.30pm lecture

Mass 6.30pm celebrated by **Fr Mark Raper SJ** and **Fr Peter Hosking SJ**

St Ignatius', 326 Church St, Richmond

RSVP: (03) 9926 5710

justice@melbourne.catholic.org.au

“It’s up to us!” reconciliation



PAT DODSON:
“We’ve missed a lot of opportunities. We missed a great opportunity when the Government failed to apologise to the Stolen Generation. We’ve missed opportunities to recognise Native Title. We’ve missed serious opportunities.”

Three years ago, hundreds of thousands of Australians marched in support of Reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. Since the end of the tenure of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation in 2000, there is now no formal national approach to Reconciliation. There are voices that say we are moving backwards, not forwards.

Listening and learning from our young people is the key to achieving Reconciliation in this country, says Pat Dodson, former chair of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation. Speaking to a packed house at Spirituality in the Pub in Collingwood recently, Dodson lamented the lost opportunities and posed a new path forward.

“We’ve missed a lot of opportunities,” said Dodson. “We missed a great opportunity when the Government failed to apologise to the Stolen Generation. We’ve missed opportunities to recognise Native Title. We’ve missed serious opportunities”.

Dodson was quick to celebrate the support and participation of the community. “Don’t ever underestimate the worth of walking over the bridge. That day will stay in hearts and minds long after the Prime Minister is gone”.

But the current focus on practical reconciliation is too restrictive, says Dodson. Addressing social indicators of poverty isn’t enough. Whilst indigenous rights to health, education and employment are all crucially important, Dodson believes it’s the recognition of these rights that is integral to how they are achieved. For indigenous rights to be actualised they need to be enshrined.

Reconciliation is now the “deadpan, lifeless process” because we’ve let Canberra lead us there says Dodson. “It’s been shallow leadership...and we’ve all been tarred with it. But everyone gets to be lied to. And everyone gets to accept or reject it. It’s up to us as to what we do with it”.

Reconciliation needs a new approach, it needs new people, it needs a new direction. “We need to redirect ourselves with a sense of the worth and value of what we’ve achieved, of the contribution we’ve made”.

Dodson believes as Christians we have a moral choice to make as to how we respond to reconciliation, and that our response should be steeped in the Christian belief of liberation from oppression. “The issues have been blatantly

put before us and asked for our response on the basis of justice”, says Dodson.

The key is in our young people, says Dodson. “We need to be innovative, we need a sense of adventure, a sense of going beyond the calculated risk. We need to think the unthinkable and seek to do it”.

“Young Australians are tired of being lied to. They want answers. They want to know the truth”, says Dodson. They want to see change and they need to be empowered to make it happen. Young people need the opportunity to participate and share their vision for the future. “We need to transfer skills to younger people who can take it to next level”.

Keeping Koori Kids in Catholic Education

There are 4911 Indigenous Catholics in Victoria. There are 368 Indigenous students in Victorian Catholic Schools.

The Opening the Doors Foundation has been established to assist in addressing the profound educational disadvantage still being experienced by Indigenous children today. Sponsored by the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry, the Foundation aims to provide opportunities for Victorian Indigenous youth to build leadership skills, to become role models and future mentors by offering a way for Indigenous families to choose a path of education. The Foundation is currently assisting approximately one third of the Indigenous students in Victorian Catholic schools.

For further information or to make a donation, contact: Aboriginal Catholic Ministry, PO Box 1088, Thornbury, Vic, 3071. Phone: 9480 3849

Say NO to cuts to Community Services



FR JOE CADDY:

"While community organisations are happy to work as partners with the Government there is a growing sense that the good will of those organisations is being exploited."

The Victorian Government is planning to cut funding to the community services sector by \$35 million over the next three years.

These cuts will affect the one in 4 Victorian families using essential community services such as family support, children's services, services to people with disabilities, alcohol and drug counselling services and housing support.

"The attempt by State Government to impose productivity savings on the funded community sector is the latest in a series of funding decisions that have had a harsh impact on the viability of community based agencies over a number of years", said Father Joe Caddy of Catholic Social Services.

"While community organisations are happy to provide resources and work as partners with the Government in the provision of specialist services such as child protection, there is a growing sense that the good will of those organisations is being exploited.

"The real danger is that many of them will be forced to the wall, in that case the Government and the whole community will lose the benefit of an enormous amount of social infrastructure and cohesion," said Fr Caddy.

Join the campaign coordinated by the Victorian Council of Social Services (VCOSS) and petition government to protest these cutbacks. Go to www.vcooss.org.au.kpmg/petition/ to sign the petition to say NO to cutbacks to Community Services.



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AUSTRALIA**



Catholic Commission for Justice, Development and Peace

Telephone: (03) 9926 5710
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Caritas Australia Melbourne Office

Telephone: (03) 9926 5706
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Web: www.caritas.org.au



Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Melbourne

Telephone: (03) 9480 3849
Email: acmmelb@vicnet.net.au
Web: www.vicnet.net.au/~acmm/



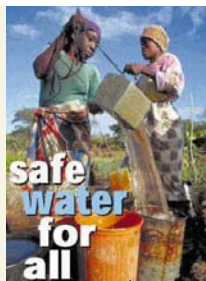
Melbourne Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office

Telephone: (03) 9926 5720
Email: mcmro@melbourne.catholic.org.au
Web: www.melbourne.catholic.org.au/mcmro

human rights register

Over the past four years, the status of some human rights in Australia has deteriorated in a number of areas. There is an urgent need for the Australian community to recognise the plight of refugees and indigenous Australians, homeless people, people in poverty and people who have limited access to the law and demand that Governments adhere to our universal rights.

The Human Rights Register, facilitated by the Catholic Commission for Justice, Development & Peace, Melbourne, is an annual Non Government Organisation audit of Human rights developments. The register is a useful teaching tool for schools about developments and violations of human rights in Australia. The Human Rights register can be accessed at www.ccjdp.org.au



water matters

As we cope with ongoing drought in Australia, we are increasingly aware of the value of water. The situation is worse for 1.1 billion people around the world who do not have access to a safe and secure water supply. Without water, lives are lost, disease is endemic and droughts are even more devastating.

In this International Year of Freshwater, TEAR Australia is running a Water Matters campaign, to ensure that all people, especially the worlds poor have access to safe water and sanitation.

Water Matters is lobbying around the agreed United Nations target to halve by 2015 the number of people without access to water services and calling on the Australian Government to direct more funds to increase its own aid spending on water and sanitation. Supporters can sign the campaign postcard that calls on the Australian Government to lift spending for water and sanitation in developing countries at www.tear.org.au/advocacy/water/watarmatters/.