

# Catholic Social Justice Council

Archdiocese of Perth

2013 Newsletter  
Issue 1

## Introducing Our Newsletter

Welcome to the latest newsletter from the Archdiocese of Perth Catholic Social Justice Council. In this edition we aim to provide you some background information on the council and the importance of social justice, upcoming events and how *you* can get involved.

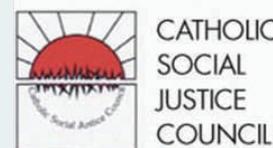
### WHAT IS THE CATHOLIC SOCIAL JUSTICE COUNCIL?

“To serve God in justice and peace.”

- The Council helps spread the biblical message of justice and peace
- Offers talks and brief courses in Catholic social thinking to parishes, groups and individuals
- Provides information and support for those who want to set up a justice and peace group
- Strives to work cooperatively with others involved in works for justice and peace
- Works beside victims of social injustice
- Advocates constructive social change according to Biblical and Catholic social teaching.

### WHAT DOES THE CATHOLIC SOCIAL JUSTICE COUNCIL DO?

- The Council develops a peace and justice spirituality through prayer and scripture reflection at all meetings
- Meets for business every month, and holds a planning day towards the end of each year to decide on priorities.
- Works to promote the annual Social Justice Statement of the Australian Bishops on Social Justice Sunday, the last Sunday of September each year.



## Review of the 2012-2013 Social Justice Statement

**The Gift of Family in Difficult Times:** The social and economic challenges facing families today

The ASCJC Social Justice Statement for 2012–13 celebrated the role of families in our society, urging all Australians to consider the challenges that families face today. We are reminded that families, the basis of our community of faith and the very foundation of society, can be beacons for a more compassionate and just society. This statement has guided the work of the Catholic Social Justice Council of the Archdiocese of Perth over the last twelve months. It has been used to;

- Develop and inform the strategic plan of the Social Justice Council.
- Provide a framework for questions posed to politicians ahead of the recent State election.
- Promote an ecumenical spirit for justice and peace in solidarity with Christian and other interfaith groups



## 2013-2014 ACSJC Social Justice Statement

**Lazarus At Our Gate: A critical moment in the fight against world poverty.**

In the 2013-2014 Social Justice Statement, *Lazarus At Our Gate*, the Australian Catholic Bishops call on the Christian community and all Australians – especially our leaders – to focus on our obligation to help and accompany our neighbours.

This is a critical moment in the fight against world poverty. It is time to renew our resolve to address poverty in our region and globally. Social Justice Sunday will be celebrated on September 29. To order the Social Justice Statement and associated resources from the ACSJC, go to [www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au](http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au).

### SEE, JUDGE, ACT: A PROCESS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE GROUPS

*There are three stages which should normally be followed in the reduction of social principles into practice. First, one reviews the concrete situation; secondly, one forms a judgement on it in the light of these same principles; thirdly, one decides what the circumstances can and should be done to implement these principles. These are the three stages that are usually expressed in the three terms: look, judge, act.*

Pope John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra*, 1961 (# 236)



Further resources to assist in seeing, judging and acting well are available from the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council— [http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/files/Social-Teaching/Reading the Signs of the Times.pdf](http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/files/Social-Teaching/Reading%20the%20Signs%20of%20the%20Times.pdf)

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

#### July 2013

Aboriginal and Torres Strait  
Islander Sunday ...7th July

NAIDOC week ... 7-14th July

#### August 2013

Election Forum, Ecumenical  
Social Justice Roundtable ...  
14th August

#### September 2013

Social Justice Sunday statement  
release...29th September

If you have an upcoming event you would like included in our next newsletter please let us know.



*“Human dignity is always more important than things and people must never be treated as a means to an end”.*

## ASYLUM SEEKERS AND CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

As a £10 Pom who migrated to Australia in the 1960's, the dilemma of migration is very close to my heart. What my family did in migrating, along with many thousands of other families would be today termed as 'economic migration', but for us at the time, we were leaving all we knew, on the basis of 'hope'. Hope for a better life, more opportunities for employment, better education and a better place to grow up.

While restoring that hope to is key to this complex issue, Australia seems to have turned this into a political circus that is damaging the lives of vulnerable people. In his experience as a former director of processing centres Greg Lake was caught between the human pain of refugees for whom hope is being denied and having to work as a public servant dealing with 'knee jerk' policies. "Policies should be guided by the simple principle that people matter and they are valuable". (Links to the full presentation can be found on the website)

This principle is core to Catholic social justice teaching. Human dignity is always more important than things and people must never be treated as a means to an end. The full range of human rights that arise from this God-given human dignity must be respected in asylum seekers, refugees or migrants, regardless of their age, nationality, religion or legal status. It is not legitimate for nations to respond to migration out of a narrow sense of national interest. "The human person has primacy over the state, which exists only to serve the human person by organising and promoting the common good". (*The Call to Hospitality; Sandie Cornish (2002) ACSJC Series Paper #44*).

Nigel Hayward

## Celebration of Diversity

On a beautiful winters day in Fremantle a large crowd listened to music, danced and enjoyed food from many nationalities. This reminded me how fortunate we are that in Australia we have the opportunity and right to gather and make our voices heard. We can shout that as Australians we value all people, no matter who they are, where they came from and how they got here.

The **Refugee Welcome Fiesta** on Saturday 22 June at the Fremantle Esplanade aimed to express solidarity and celebrate diversity. That it did with a colourful array of voices raised in song and in protest about the way refugees are being treated in Australia. A wide range of political, community and church groups **walked together** around the streets of Fremantle to express their solidarity in calling for the end to mandatory detention of asylum seekers in Australia and for increased support for refugees seeking to make a new start in our community.



Photo: Rocio Martin

Hopefully you managed to make it there, if not mark it in your diaries for next year.

**How Can I get involved? Here are 5 easy ways for you to get involved in social justice :**

- 1) Volunteer your time
- 2) Write to your local MP
- 2) Get informed on social justice issues
- 4) Contact CSJC
- 5) Subscribe to ACSJC emails and statements

## JOIN IN ANTI-POVERTY WEEK: 13 – 19 OCTOBER 2013

Anti-Poverty Week in 2013 starts on Sunday 13 October and ends on Saturday 19 October. The UN's International Anti-Poverty Day is Thursday 17 October.

The Week focuses on poverty around the world, especially in the poorest countries but also in wealthier countries such as Australia. Its main aims are to strengthen public understanding of the causes and consequences of poverty and hardship around the world and within Australia; encourage research, discussion and action to address these problems, including action by individuals, communities, organisations and governments.

Interest has been growing steadily in Australia in recent years and activities such as public lectures, workshops, conferences, debates, concerts, displays, sports days, media briefings and other events have been organised.

Last year, at least 500 organisations around Australia participated in more than 400 activities during the Week, with a total participation of more than 10,000 people.

### Some Plans and Suggestions

Everyone who wants to reduce poverty and hardship is encouraged to organise activities during the Week or join in some being organised by other people. The activities can be large or small, and activities at local levels are especially welcome.

Official opening activities will be organised on Sunday 13 October. It is suggested that people could organise local anti-poverty forums on Wednesday 16 October, perhaps inviting local MPs and mayors to attend. But activities can be on whatever topics, and whatever days, to suit their organisers.

It would be very helpful if organisers could provide details of their plans for posting on the special website, [www.antipovertyweek.org.au](http://www.antipovertyweek.org.au), in order to encourage participation and stimulate action by other people.

The website also includes basic fact sheets, promotional material and links to sources of information and ideas about ways of reducing poverty and hardship.

**For more information call 1-300-797-290 or [apw@antipovertyweek.org.au](mailto:apw@antipovertyweek.org.au)**

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