



Act Justly

Parishioners and prophets

Signs of hope from the first Archdiocesan gathering of social justice groups and contacts



On Saturday 14 March, 40 people gathered for the first Archdiocesan Gathering of Parish Social Justice Groups and Contacts, at Mary MacKillop Place in North Sydney. Drawn from 18 parishes across Sydney, participants spent the afternoon and sharing their experiences, vision and ideas for building God's kingdom of justice and peace through Sydney parishes.

Parishioners shared hope-filled stories of action, from offering friendship and community to local refugees, to developing partnerships with communities in East Timor. Education and awareness-raising were a key theme, with groups educating themselves and others through advent programs focused on environmental advocacy, discussion groups looking at social issues from a Catholic perspective, and liturgies with a strong justice dimension. Groups were also keen to reach beyond the Church community, for example by working with the local council to declare a municipal 'Peace Week' and display peace messages throughout shops and public spaces.

'Hearing what other parishes are doing has been inspirational', one parishioner said. 'I've really appreciated this opportunity to be affirmed and encouraged by the work that's going on.'

Participants in the gathering also had the chance to explore some of their motivations for acting for justice, and its connection to their faith. They reflected on the central role of justice and peace in the mission of the Church, and on the commitment of the Hebrew prophets and of Jesus to standing with the poor and marginalized.

Chantelle Ogilvie, Research and Project Officer with the Justice and Peace Office, which organized the event, described it as an 'exciting beginning.'

'This venture, which comes out of the Archdiocesan pastoral plan, is a new one, and we are so heartened by what is already happening in parishes. All across Sydney there are committed people, prophets and disciples themselves, who are living their faith in concrete action. As an office, we are really looking forward to supporting them, and growing their efforts.'

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The Justice and Peace Office is an agency of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney. The Office promotes justice, peace, ecology and development through educational, collaborative and advisory activities based on the social teachings of the Catholic Church.

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Acting together for the common good

A new alliance aims to rebuild civil society in Sydney – and give Sydney-siders a voice

Civil society in Sydney is in need of renewal. From transport stress to the housing squeeze, most Sydney residents are experiencing significant pressures - but feel powerless to fix them. The problems are daunting even for traditional membership-based organizations such as trade unions, religious communities and community organizations.

The Sydney Alliance is a new coalition that aims to strengthen civil society organizations so that they can do something to tackle these issues. Established in 2007, the mission of the Alliance is to provide the community with a voice to express common values and aspirations for a fair and just Sydney. The Alliance is based on collaboration and strong relationships between a diverse range of organizations, from the Jewish Board of Deputies to the Rail, Tram and Bus Union.

Late last year these were joined by the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney, which is now a member organisation.

Being part of the Alliance enables the people of the Church in Sydney to access leadership training opportunities that will help them to animate their local communities and take public action. It also means that Sydney Catholics will help shape the Alliance's agenda, which will be launched at a huge founding assembly in 2011, followed by a major campaign to make an impact on political and business leaders.

One of the models for the Sydney Alliance is the UK alliance, London Citizens. In the decade since it was established, London Citizens has trained more than 2000 community leaders and won substantial positive change, including £20 million for some of London's lowest paid families as part of its 'Living Wage' Campaign.

The Justice and Peace Office would be interested in talking with any individuals, parishes and other Catholic communities or organizations who may be interested in getting involved in the Sydney Alliance. To find out more please contact Chantelle Ogilvie at chantelle.ogilvie@sydney.catholic.org.au.

We exhort Christians to 'take an active part in public life, and work together for the benefit of the whole human race, as well as for their own political communities.'

Pope John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris* 46.



Have you ever wished you could change your community, your nation or even your world for the better? Change no matter how big or small can make a positive difference to your life and to the lives of those around you. From simple things such as cleaning up rubbish to curbing the complex universal impacts of climate change,

Aspire not to have more, but to be more...

Join the Caritas Australia's Be More Challenge!

your vision for a better world can now become a reality!

The Caritas Australia Be More Challenge, inspired by the words of Oscar Romero 'Aspire not to have more, but to be more', invites people of all ages to take up the challenge to be more in their daily lives and to take action for social and environmental justice.

Set yourself five challenges – personal, family, local, national and global – through your actions tackle the structures of poverty and inequality and

bring about personal and global transformation.

The Be More website is your tool for social action and will change not only the way in which you view the world, but the way in which it views you! Join the challenge today and be the change you wish to see tomorrow!

To join the challenge visit www.bemore.org.au or to find out more contact 1800bemore (1800 236 673)

Dare to be challenged! Want to be a part of a life-changing event?

Departing in September 2009 for Timor-Leste, **Palms Encounters** are guided short-term cross-cultural experiences available to individuals or groups of up to 8 participants, more details on Palms' website <http://www.palms.org.au> or contact ben@palms.org.au, (02)95189551

What's on around Sydney

15 April Israel's War in Gaza and International Law

A public lecture by Professor Yuval Shany, the Hersch Lauterpacht Chair in International Law at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. **6:00 - 8:00 pm, Sydney Law School, Building F10, Eastern Avenue, University of Sydney (Camperdown Campus)**. Contact: 9351 0248. RSVP: law.events@usyd.edu.au. More info at www.law.usyd.edu.au/scil/events.html.

17 April The Scandal of Homelessness – What Must be Done

Politics in the Pub presents Ian Webster, Em. Professor of Public Health and Community Medicine, UNSW, Physician to the Homeless; and Felicity Reynolds, CEO Mercy Foundation, the new permanent housing for homeless project, Common Ground. Cost: \$5 to become social member of Gaelic Club. **6:00 - 7:45 pm, Gaelic Club, Level 1, 64 Devonshire Street, Surry Hills**. Contact: 9358 4834 or tomspondb@bigpond.com. More info at www.politicsinthepub.org.au.

17 April Jesuits and Justice

Sandie Cornish leads this workshop exploring justice, culture and interfaith dialogue in the mission of the Australian Province. Cost: Free for anyone in-volved in the work of the Australian Jesuits; suggested contribution for others wishing to participate \$50. **9:30 am - 4:30 pm, Francis Xavier Parish Centre, 19 Mackenzie Street, Lavender Bay**. Contact: 8920 0202 or Loyola@loyola.org.au. More info at www.faithdo-ingjustice.com.au/docs/JesuitsJusticeFlyer09.pdf.

22 April Youth in Harmony Photographic Exhibition Launch

This exhibition showcases artworks by refugee and asylum-seeker backgrounds youth. **6:30 for 7:00 pm, Pine Street Creative Arts Centre, 64 Pine Street, Chippendale**. Contact: 9319 0288 or cssyouth@eccnsw.org.au.

22 April A New Era for Social Housing

Catholic Health Australia, Catholic Social Services Australia and St Vincent de Paul Society present this national forum for agencies working in the Health, Aged Care, Community and Welfare sectors. Cost: \$55. **8:45 am - 4:00 pm, Level 23 Westpac Place, 275 Kent Street, Sydney**. Registration closes 17 April. Contact: 6260 5980 or deborahr@cha.org.au.

25 April Redfern Anzac Day Street March and Commemorative Service

The Coloured Digger Project Steering Committee and the Babana Aboriginal Men's Group organize this annual event to honour, recognize and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander servicemen and service women. The event will include a march, service, cultural performances and yarns from ex-servicemen, ex-servicewomen and their families. **1:00 pm - 4:30 pm. Assemble at the Block and proceed to Redfern Park, Redfern**. Contact: 0417 929 701 or raymin@me.com.

30 April - 2 May Ecology, Cosmology and Spirituality

This academic seminar is offered by the Broken Bay Institute and presented by Denis Edwards, senior lecturer in systematic theology in the School of Theology at Flinders University and founding member of the Advisory Board of Catholic Earthcare Australia. Cost \$450. **9.00 am - 4.00 pm, Campbelltown Catholic Club, 20-22 Camden Road, Campbelltown**. Contact: 9847 0030 or info@bbi.catholic.edu.au. More info at www.bbi.catholic.edu.au.

1 May Australia - US Wargames: A Most Destructive Form of Defense

Politics in the Pub presents Dr Hanna Middleton, Sydney Peace Foundation; Dennis Dougherty, Australian Anti-Bases Campaign Coalition; and David Bradbury, award-winning Australian film-maker. Cost: \$5 to become social member of Gaelic Club. **6:00 - 7:45 pm, Gaelic Club, Level 1, 64 Devonshire Street, Surry Hills**. Contact: 9358 4834 or tomspondb@bigpond.com. More info at www.politicsinthepub.org.au.

3 May What is Social Justice?

A meeting organized by Dulwich Hill parish social justice group. **11:00 am, presbytery of St Paul of the Cross Catholic Church, 532 New Canterbury Road, Dulwich Hill**. Contact: alnmegport@bigpond.com.

What's on around Sydney (cont.)

5 May Afternoon Tea for the Future: Public Transport

An informal discussion about how public transport can contribute to community health and environmental sustainability. Share your opinions about the need to expand our public transport system, and how we can take action. Cost \$2 - \$5. **2:00 pm to 4:00 pm, the Edmund Rice Centre, 15 Henley Street, West Homebush.** Contact: leoniec@erc.org.au

6 May What's spirituality go to do with the law?

Paddington Spirituality in the Pub presents Hadia Mukhtar, Lebanese-born lawyer and medical practitioner, and Justice Terry Sheahan, former NSW Attorney General and Judge in the Land and Environment Court. **7:30 pm - 9:00 pm, Bellevue Hotel, 159 Hargrave St, Paddington.** Contact: 9387 3152.

9 May Manly Fair Trade Market

Manly has recently been accredited as the first Fair Trade community in NSW. The Fair Trade Market will showcase a range of vendors, plus entertainment, kid's activities, Fair Trade coffee and chocolate and much more. **9.00 am - 4.00 pm, Manly Wharf Forecourt.** More info at www.manly.nsw.gov.au/Manly-Fair-Trade-Markets.html.

9 May World Fair Trade Day @ the Fair Trade Coffee Company

Watch amazing performances by talented drummers and dancers. Bring your drums if you want to join in the beat to BEAT POVERTY! All proceeds from the cafe go towards funding Palms Australia's work placing skilled volunteers in developing countries. **2:30pm, The Fair Trade Coffee Company, 33 Glebe Point Road, Glebe.** Contact: 9660 0621. Throughout Fair Trade Fortnight (29th April-13th May), there will be promotions between 3.30pm-6.00pm daily at the Café.

17 May Auburn Gallipoli Mosque Open Day

This is the 9th Annual Open Day at Auburn Gallipoli Mosque. The Open day aims to promote interfaith understanding in order to preserve peace and harmony within Australia's multicultural society. **10:00 am - 4:00 pm, Auburn Gallipoli Mosque, North Parade, Auburn.** Contact: 9646 5972. More info at www.gallipolimosque.org.au

18 May Ciaron O'Reilly Seminar

The Edmund Rice Network presents Ciaron O'Reilly, well-known Christian peace activist, non-violent resister and active member of the Catholic Worker movement. Ciaron will speak about his experience in nonviolent activism in the lead-up to this year's US-Australian war-games at Shoalwater Bay. **7:00 pm, Christian Brothers Centre, 2 Thames Street, Balmain.** Contact: 9810 3922 or dmulhearn@edmundrice.org.

23 May Mount Druitt Reconciliation Walk

Organised by the Australians for Reconciliation Chifley Committee. **2:20pm, Dawson Mall, Mount Druitt.**

23 - 24 May Alleviation of Poverty through Volunteering

A workshop presented by Palms Australia for those considering living, working and volunteering cross-culturally. **Residential, 'The Hermitage', Mittagong.** Contact: 9518 9511 or ben@palms.org.au. More info at www.palms.org.au.

24 May Women of Faith Dinner: Creating a Better Future

An evening that combines the intellectual, cultural and spiritual richness of women from diverse faith and traditional backgrounds. Cost: \$35. **6:00pm for a 6:30 start, Bosphorus Reception Lounge, 7 Station Street, Auburn.** Contact: 9702 0789. Registration by 15 May. More info at www.affinity.org.au.

The initiatives above are organized by a range of Church and non-Church groups throughout Sydney. The Justice and Peace Office does not necessarily endorse the views and perspectives that will be expressed at these events.