



Act Justly

Make your vote count, say Catholic Bishops

An election Statement from the Bishops of Australia

“Catholic Bishops do not tell people who to vote for” Archbishop Philip Wilson, President of the Catholic Bishops Conference, said today, speaking on behalf of the Catholic Bishops of Australia.

“Bishops are aware that, at election time, many in the community look to church leaders for advice about relevant issues.” Archbishop Wilson said.

“We are privileged to live in a democracy such as Australia where voting matters. We urge all people to take their vote seriously. We urge them to think carefully about the issues that are relevant in their local area and nationally. We urge them to think about the issues that are not just important for them but for the whole of Australia”.

“The 2010 Federal Election is of great importance for the future and the welfare of all residents of Australia. Though many Catholics are rightly involved in the political process in all political parties, the Catholic Church in Australia does not take sides in party politics. But the Church proposes that politicians, political parties and political campaigns should all be judged against six essential criteria. Those six essential criteria are:

- The right of every person to human dignity;
- The right of every person to adequate food, shelter and protection;
- The right of every person to equality of access to education, health, employment and basic services;
- The right of every person, both present and future generations, to live in a safe, healthy and secure environment;
- The right (and the duty) of every person to contribute to society to the extent that they are able;
- The right of every person to live according to their own beliefs, to the



extent that those beliefs do not impact upon the rights of others.”

Particular issues that Catholic Church Agencies see as important include:

Health: A Health System that is efficient and accessible for all; properly funded mental health services and an improvement in aged care services.

Social Justice: Human dignity demands that a wealthy country such as Australia must define its priorities so that those who cannot cope in society are helped through government spending by those who can;

Migrants and Refugees: All those seeking to live in Australia should be treated with dignity and in accordance with international law;

Overseas Aid: Increase Australia’s overseas aid to 0.7% of GNI as a step towards recognising Australia’s plenty in the midst of great need;

Women: To protect their dignity, steps must be taken to protect women from all forms of violence; pay equity should be improved and paid parental leave is an important step forward.

Indigenous Australians: Until the most disadvantaged of our Indigenous citizens move beyond 3rd world living conditions, all Australians must feel ashamed and work together to change their conditions.

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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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Australian Bishops' Election Statement

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Disability: People with a disability are entitled to a quality of life equivalent to that of other Australians; serious effort must be made to improve access to services for people with disabilities and their carers.

Environment: The debate about the environment must shift to consideration of the needs of future generations, not just to avoiding present inconveniences.

Education: Schools funding should be available equitably and respect parental choice.

Religious Liberty: In a society with a variety of faiths and non-faiths, we need to be respectful of others.

Human Dignity: The value of human life must be respected at every stage.

The Catholic Church in Australia seeks to contribute to building the Australian society through schools, universities, hospitals, social services, aged care, international relations and our response to poverty locally and in the developed world. Various Catholic Agencies (such as Catholic Health Australia and Catholic Social Services Australia) have detailed Election Platforms. Specific details can be provided by contacting:

Fr Brian Lucas, General Secretary
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference
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RESOURCES FOR THE ELECTION

The Australian Catholic Social Justice Council has created a leaflet, *A Vote for Social Justice*, which is based on Catholic social teaching. The leaflet is available at www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au

NetAct and The Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes (CLRI NSW) have released a series of issues papers for the election. Go to www.clrinsw.org and click on 'What's New' / 'Visit our Election Special Information Page'.

Meanwhile, Australian Young Christian Workers have produced *Voting Justly*, a simple session for youth groups in parishes and movements, to help young people consider their faith when voting. To find out more contact sarah.lentern@ycw.org.au



Reach out. Give life.

GET INVOLVED GLOBALLY – VISIT EAST TIMOR WITH CATHOLIC MISSION

You are invited to come along with us whilst we travel deep into the culture and lifestyle of the people of the youngest and poorest nation in South East Asia on an immersion expedition to Timor-Leste **25 Sep – 10 Oct 2010**. This incredible journey include visits with children in orphanages and schools, health clinics and training centres as well as discussions with church leaders involved in outreach, community services and programs. A core element of the journey will be an experience of living with a host community. Expressions of interest or for more information contact Damian Nelson at dnelson@catholicmission.org.au or on 0438 743 588.

Vinnies children make a difference

On June 22 and 30, Mini Vinnies groups from throughout the Sydney Archdiocese and Parramatta Diocese came together for the inaugural Mini Vinnies Gatherings on 22nd and 30th June at the Australian Catholic University, Strathfield. Over 200 children from 23 schools took part over these two days of fun-filled and formative activities.

Mini Vinnies is a primary school social justice group that supports children to help those in need within their school and local community. Mini Vinnies introduces its young members to social justice issues, and to the St Vincent de Paul Society as a means to live their faith through action. Mini Vinnies members run fundraising initiatives, raise

awareness about social justice issues, and participate in community service.

The theme of the gathering focused on the words of Vinnies founder Frederic Ozanam: "Let us do without hesitation

whatever good lies at our hands". Children enjoyed a BBQ lunch, opportunities to share their work and to pray, as well a key note address from Frederic and Rosalie Rendu themselves! The children also participated in workshops to learn about social justice issues, including overseas development, homelessness, refugee and disability Issues.

Some Mini Vinnies members were asked why they enjoy being part of Mini Vinnies. Here were their



responses:

"Mini Vinnies gives us the opportunity to help people in our community and meet other people in fun ways"

"I like being in Mini Vinnies because the money we raise and the food we get goes to people who really need it"

"I enjoy being in Mini Vinnies because it teaches me more about homelessness"

Violence in Australia: A Message of Peace

Social Justice Sunday is 26 September. This year the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Social Justice Sunday Statement deals with the anger and violence found in families, in communities and in our nation. It calls individuals and society to a conversion of heart and to the way of peace that was lived and proclaimed by Jesus Christ. To find out more and to order copied for your parish go to www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au.

During September the Justice and Peace Office will be offering a workshop for parishes and social justice agencies wishing to highlight the statement in local communities.

Union, theologians discuss a moral economy

On June 16, Unions NSW hosted a roundtable of Christian thinkers examining the moral dimensions of the economy.

During the roundtable discussion, participants were invited to comment on a charter of principles that Unions NSW has developed for its Better Services Campaign. This campaign aims to foster public discussion about public investment in services such as education, transport, energy and emergency response.

The meeting, which involved Catholic and Protestant theologians and economists, arose out of a desire by leaders and campaigners at Unions NSW to deepen and articulate the values base that underlies its campaign. It is the fruit of dialogue between unions and faith communities that has happened as a result of the Sydney Alliance.

The Sydney Alliance is a broad-based coalition of religious organisations, trade unions and community groups which seek to strengthen civil society in Sydney and collaborate for the common good.

The Better Services ecumenical roundtable was one example of such collaboration, and the opportunity the Alliance provides for the Catholic Church to reclaim its public role and share the gift of Catholic social thought.

The Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney formally joined the Sydney Alliance in December 2008.

For more information contact chantelle.ogilvie@sydneycatholic.org.au.

Children on the Move

August 23 to 29 is Migrant and Refugee Week in the Australian Catholic Church. To assist communities to celebrate this week, the Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office has produced a kit focusing on 'Minor Migrants and Refugees.'

The kit includes scripture reflections and child appropriate activities for each day of Migrant and Refugee Week, as well as homily notes, prayers of petition and excerpts from Church teaching.

In his message for the 96th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, Pope Benedict XVI highlights the plight of child migrants and refugees. In doing so, he recalls that Jesus himself was a refugee child, forced to flee to Egypt due to Herod's persecution.

"... hospitality and solidarity to strangers, especially if they are children, become a proclamation of the Gospel of solidarity," the Holy Father writes.

Faith organisations act together for families

"CatholicCare Sydney is very excited about this new partnership with the Lebanese Moslem Association," the Chief Executive Officer of CatholicCare, Bernard Boerma said.

"We are committed to providing services to all members of the community, and this initiative will greatly increase the ability of the Family Relationship Centre to provide services to Muslim families in south west Sydney" he said.

Ziad Ghamraoui, General Manager of Lebanese Moslem Association said;"We hope to ensure that much needed services are available to Muslims to address issues facing our members in South West Sydney. We look forward to this joint venture

and hope to collaborate on a greater level in the future."

Representatives of CatholicCare and the Lebanese Muslim Association met on July 8 at Lakemba Mosque, to sign an historic agreement to assist families in south western Sydney.

The first-ever joint venture project between the two organisations will provide assistance to Muslim clients at CatholicCare's Family Relationship Centre at Bankstown.

This innovative project involves the secondment of Sheikh Haisam Farache, an Imam at Lakemba Mosque and practicing solicitor, as a trainee Family Liaison Officer at the



Signing the agreement at Lakemba Mosque

Family Relationship Centre. Sheikh Haisam will be offered mentorship and employment in the role of Family Liaison Officer on a part time basis to provide services to Muslim families seeking assistance at the Family Relationship Centre.

What's on around Sydney (cont.)

13 August **United Nations Association Australia National Conference: The State of the World Post-Copenhagen**

Topics include UN and Climate Change, the Millennium Development Goals, human rights, peace around the world, nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, and linking conservation and poverty reduction. Cost: \$40 - \$100. **9am – 5pm, NSW Parliament Theatre, Macquarie St, Sydney.** Contact: 0404 257 515 or office@unaansw.org.au.

15 August **Walk Against Warming**

Walk Against Warming is Australia's biggest community day of action on climate change. Join with people from all walks of life and stand up for urgent action on climate change. Bring your friends, banners and placards. **12pm, beginning at Belmore Park, Central.** For more information go to

17 August **Dream or Reality: Affordable Housing in Western Sydney**

A forum presented by the Western Sydney Housing Coalition, which includes talks by housing experts and opportunities to participate in workshops on refugees, affordable housing or homelessness. **9am - 2:30pm, Casula Powerhouse Arts Theatre, 1 Casula Rd, Casula.** RSVP by 11 August. Contact: 9782 6547.

29 August **Explore Australia's Response to Asylum Seekers and Refugees**

Fr Jim Carty's stories of working with asylum seekers and refugees are moving, confronting and offer different facts from those we sometimes receive from our politicians. **2pm – 4pm, the Ursuline Piazza, 53 Leopold St, Croydon Park.** RSVP essential by 23 August. Contact ursprov@bigpond.com.

3 –18 September **Cycle Against the Traffick**

Cycle Against the Traffick is supported by Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans and aims to spread awareness about slavery and trafficking. For more info go to: <http://www.cycleagainstthetraffik.com/annualride.html>

7 September **Benedictine Spirituality Lecture: Andy Ridley**

The 2010 Benedictine Spirituality Lecture will focus on stewardship. Andy Ridley is the Executive Director of Earth Hour. **7:30pm, Rosebank College Hall.** RSVP to Angelo Gattone on 9713 3100 or email agattone@rosebank.nsw.edu.au.

9 September **Exploring the Holy See to the United Nations**

A DVD and discussion evening for young adults hosted by the Archdiocese of Sydney Life, Marriage and Family Centre. Refreshments provided. **5:30pm - 7:30pm, The Polding Centre, 133 Liverpool St, Sydney.** RSVP to lmfevents@sydneycatholic.org.

14 September **Aboriginal Voices**

Newtown Spirituality in the Pub presents Alana Taylor and Ralph Townsend. **7:30pm - 9pm, The Town Hall Hotel, 326 King St, Newtown.** Contact: 9230 7631 or email aclevana@mooball.com.

24 September **Other Ways: Growing alternatives to violence**

How are we nurturing a culture of peace in these, the best and worst of times? All who are engaged in peace and justice are invited to share together, build stronger networks for the future, celebrate achievements and mark the end of the Decade to Overcome Violence. Speakers include Claudette Werleigh (Pax Christi International), Sr Susan Connelly (Mary MacKillop East Timor Mission) and Azim Khamisa (teacher of 'Achieving Peace through Forgiveness'). **1pm – 9pm, Santa Sabina College, 90 The Boulevard, Strathfield.** Contact: 9390 5319 or chantelle.ogilvie@sydneycatholic.org

23 September **Book Launch: Power in Coalition**

Amanda Tattersal, Director of the Sydney Alliance, launches her new book, which examines the potential for broad based coalitions to effect social change, organizational renewal and union revitalisation. **6pm, Trades Hall Auditorium, 377 Sussex St, Sydney.** Contact: 9881599 or email cdelprat@unionsnsw.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.