



Act Justly

Faiths, unions, community forge a common future

Hundreds gather for Sydney Alliance assembly

On Wednesday 2 December a diverse crowd of over 250 people from 21 Sydney organisations, including the Archdiocese of Sydney, the Jewish Board of deputies, the Arab Council Australia and the Rail, Tram and Bus Union gathered at for the Sydney Alliance assembly, *Forging a Common Future*.

The Sydney Alliance is a broad-based coalition whose aim is to rebuild civil society in order to shift the balance of power in Sydney in favour of ordinary people and their dreams for a more just and liveable city.

"Conventional wisdom would have us believe that a diverse range of faiths from Jews to Catholics, Protestants and Muslims would struggle to find much in

common; and if trade unions and community groups were added to the mix, the result would be total chaos," says Amanda Tattersall, Director of the Sydney Alliance.

The Sydney Alliance is proving such conventional wisdom wrong, with its members working closely together for a better city.

The December assembly exemplified this. Co-chaired by the Sydney Archdiocese's Chantelle Ogilvie and Brad Parker from the Construction, Forestry, Mining, Energy Union, it showcased the breadth of the Alliance, with speakers from each organization taking the stage to voice their commitment to acting together for the common good as part of an Alliance-wide 'roll call'.

Continued on page 2.

Contents

SYDNEY ALLIANCE (CONTINUED)	2
CONFERENCE ON REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS	2
PACIFIC CALLING AT COPENHAGEN	2
CARITAS IN VERITATE	2
AROUND THE PARISHES	3
WHAT'S ON AROUND SYDNEY	3

Advent in a suffering world

Justice and peace reflection day

On Saturday 5 December, the Justice and Peace Office held its first faith and justice reflection gathering, *What God has Promised: Justice, Peace and the Coming of Christmas*. The gathering offered a space for people to reflect on the meaning of Advent in the context of injustice in Australia and overseas.

Beginning with prayer to 'welcome the child Christ into places of suffering and injustice', participants then heard from two speakers, Dr Antoinette Collins and Kir Deng. Dr Collins, a lecturer in Biblical Studies at the Australian Catholic University, spoke about prophetic hope in the Hebrew scriptures, describing the prophets as 'the voice that God has lent to the silent agony of the world.

Kir, a nineteen year old student of nursing, shared powerfully about his journey



Speakers Kir Deng and Antoinette Collins

from Sudan as a refugee, and the persistence of his faith through that experience. Participants described both speakers, and the conversations that followed their presentations, as uplifting, as each communicated a belief in a God who is utterly faithful even in times of great struggle.

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.

JUSTICE AND PEACE OFFICE
Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney
Level 12, Polding Centre, 133
Liverpool St, Sydney 2000.

Tel (02) 9390 5319
Fax (02) 9261 5239
japp@sydneycatholic.org

Sydney Alliance forging a common future

From page 1.

Participants heard powerful testimonies about the need for change in Sydney. Grassroots leaders shared about their struggles with poor working conditions, racism and disengagement in their own communities before expressing their confidence that involvement in the Alliance can make a difference to these issues. Participants then shared their own stories in small groups, as a way of building real community and as an example of the Alliance's participatory approach.

One of the aims of the Assembly was to prepare for a big year of action next year. In 2010, large numbers of members will be trained in community organizing, and will conduct listening campaigns that will encourage citizens to shape an agenda for change.

Addressing the Assembly on behalf of His Eminence Cardinal Pell, Fr Dominic Ceresoli, Episcopal Vicar for Immigration, cited *Caritas in Veritate*, the latest encyclical from Pope Benedict XVI, which

spoke about the profound impact of the market on human life. In this encyclical, the Holy Father urged new forms of civil participation to balance this and asked for people to become more active and interested as citizens.

Which is one of the reasons the Archdiocese is proud to be involved with the Sydney Alliance and to contribute to its work at revitalising Sydney, he said.

With thanks to Catholic Communications.

Pacific Calling at Copenhagen: the human face of climate change

A delegation from the Edmund Rice Centre, including human rights advocates and representatives from the communities most vulnerable to the effects of rising sea levels, have travelled to Copenhagen to ensure that the human face of climate change is not forgotten during international negotiations this month.

"What the climate crisis demands is the best our humanity has to offer - to each other and the planet," said Phil Glendenning, director of the Edmund Rice Centre and member of the delegation. "It is essentially a story about human rights, justice and equity. While it will impact every species on earth, it is the human face of this suffering that speaks most powerfully to all of us."

The delegation to Copenhagen is part of the Edmund Rice Centre's Pacific Calling Partnership. In preparation for the meeting the Pacific Calling Partnership

undertook a visit to the low-lying Pacific Island of Kiribati, to consult with local communities and witness first hand the sea encroachments already impacting on communities.

"In Kiribati we heard the concerns of President Anote Tong and of local residents and we saw for ourselves the impact rising sea levels are having," said Phil. "We saw the hospital wards that have been flooded, the dead and dying palm trees, and the villages and food-providing fields inundated by sea water."

"Countries like Tuvalu and Kiribati need assistance from outside in order for their culture and their livelihoods to survive... Surely their lives are important enough for Australian leaders to act together in a bipartisan way to address this most urgent and pressing need."

Widen the space of your tent

The Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office (ACMRO) sponsored by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference held *Widen the space of your tent the Second National Conference on the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees* on 28-29 October 2009. The Conference provided an opportunity for those working with migrants and refugees in the Church to share their experiences, obtain mutual support and deepen their knowledge of the role of migrant chaplains in Australia.

Participants in the Conference heard inspiring keynote addresses from Archbishop Mark Coleridge and migration theologian Dr Fabio Baggio. They also contributed to the further development of the National Plan for Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees.

The Conference also saw the launch of *Caring for Migrants: A Collection of Church Documents on the Pastoral Care of Migrants*, edited by Fabio Baggio CS and Maurizio Pettina CS in association with the ACMRO and the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.

Globalisation and the Church

How does Catholic faith respond to market economics? What does it say about environmental crises? What is its vision of the human person and what does this have to do global poverty?

On November 27 and 28, scholars, justice advocates and NGO workers gathered at the Australian Catholic University for dialogue about these issues and others that are raised in Pope Benedict's latest encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate*.

At the opening public lecture, Cardinal Cordes, of the Pontifical Council Cor Unum, argued that the encyclical restored the inextricable connection between faith and all work for development and justice.

It was a theme taken up the following day as theologians, economists, advocates and others broken open the document. They identified key messages such as the connection between traditional 'life issues' such as abortion and care for the natural world; the need for wealthy countries to reduce their consumption and increase their intake of migrants and refugees; and the role of love in all true work for justice.

Creator God, give us your Spirit to work together to restore your creation and to hand on a safe environment and climate to our children and theirs. Let our care for creation be our act of worship and obedience to you. Your kingdom come, and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Micah Challenge, www.micahchallenge.org.au

Around the parishes...

Homemade collaboration at Strathfield and Lane Cove

'It's very easy to be overwhelmed by the all the injustices in the world, that it is important every so often to celebrate the good things that happen – even when they happen by accident,' says Jane Soulis of St Martha's Catholic Parish, Strathfield.

Earlier this year, Jane was visiting St Michael's, Lane Cove, when she met a woman named Frances, who was selling the jams on behalf of her friend, Sheryl, to raise money to keep a Nigerian Village supplied with water. Sheryl has undertaken to raise \$1000 per month.

'So many people, when confronted with stories of poverty, shrug their shoulders and say *what can I do, I'm just one person?*' says Jane. 'I was so impressed by Sheryl's one-woman stand against this attitude, that I wanted to support her.'

Jane arranged for Sheryl to sell her jams at Strathfield parish after mass. Sheryl attended all four weekend masses, bringing along tables overflowing with jams, twelve kinds of marmalades, and more. In the one weekend Sheryl made

her \$1000 for the month.

But the story doesn't end there. Erica, the parish associate, and some other parishioners, were so impressed that they offered to assist this 'one-woman production unit'. A group has been on the train to Wahroonga and had their first experience of jam-making. Other parishioners are supplying boxes of fruit.

This is the way it should be, according to Jane: 'Those who have, work together to help those who have not.'

Rockdale parishioners explore economics and justice

In November 20 parishioners of Blessed Mary MacKillop Church, Rockdale, gathered for a talk by Dr Garrick Small, senior economics lecturer at the University of Technology, Sydney.

Dr Small, who is a keen student of Catholic social thought, spoke about the foundations for a Catholic approach to economic issues. He argued that a Catholic view of the human person as a 'rational, ethical person capable of willing the good' is the basis for genuinely human economic action. He contrasted

this to Enlightenment individualism and gave examples from history to illustrate the value of preferring human solidarity. Dr Small also suggested principles that for moral economic action, including the institution of property, the immorality of usury, just price and just wage, and the virtue of liberality.

Menai response to climate change and asylum seekers

Holy Family Parish at Menai has rounded off the year by gathering signatures and material help to respond to two big needs.

Around 140 parishioners participated in the Edmund Rice Centre's petition for strong action on climate change, which has now been passed on to parliament.

Parishioners, the local St Vincent de Paul conference, and local schools Aquinas College and Holy Family Primary school also collected toiletries and other practical items for the Asylum Seekers Centre. For students at Aquinas College this became an opportunity to learn more about the situation of asylum seekers.

What's on around

11 December The Health Impacts of Coal

This seminar, presented by the Environmental Defender's Office, looks at the risks that open cut coal mines pose to the public, and what the legal response to that risk might be. The public health risks of open cut coal mining is increasingly concerning communities throughout NSW, as a consequence of the recent mining boom, and one that the NSW authorities are yet to address in a comprehensive manner. Light refreshments will be provided. **12:30pm - 1pm, Maddocks, Angel Place, 123 Pitt Street Sydney.** Contact (02) 9262 6989 or education@edo.org.au.

12 December Walk Against Warming

This will be the Global Day of Action on Climate Change, mid-way through the Copenhagen meeting. Thousands of Australians will take part, to show our political leaders that people from all walks of life are demanding stronger and swifter action for a safe climate future. People of all faiths are invited to join the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change for the walk in Sydney. Participants in the walk are encouraged to wear sky blue shoelaces so, if you're joining ARRCC, bring a religious symbol coloured sky blue if you can! **1pm, Martin Place, Sydney to the Tarpeian Way Precinct in the Botanical Gardens.** Contact: 0405 293 466

13 December Political Football

A documentary about six courageous Wallabies who, after touring South Africa in 1969, decided to take a stand against Apartheid. This film explores the political consequences of their actions in Australia and South Africa, as well as the personal cost to the players and their families. Cost: \$5 / \$10. **3pm, Sydney Jewish Museum, 148 Darlinghurst Road, Darlinghurst.** Contact: 0406 308 492.

What's on around Sydney (cont.)

15 December An Evening of Poetry and Music with Drew Dellinger and John Seed

Drew Dellinger is a spoken word poet, professor, writer, activist and founder of Poets for Global Justice. Drew will perform poetry and talk about justice, ecology, cosmology, activism, democracy and compassion. Cost: \$5 - \$20 contribution. **6:30pm, St Joseph's Parish Hall, 12 Albert Street Edgecliff.** For more info go to www.imaginal.com.au/drewdellinger.

16 December Half Day Poetry Workshop with Drew Dellinger

A practical workshop using poetry and story to explore ecology, social justice and cosmology, and connecting ideas such as the sacredness of each being, community and the primacy of relationship. Cost: \$90 / \$50 including afternoon tea. **1:00pm – 5:00pm, NSW Writers' Centre, Callan Park, Balmain Road, Rozelle.** Bookings essential: 0409 661 534. For more info go to www.imaginal.com.au/drewdellinger.

17 December AID/WATCH Annual Trivia Night

Win fabulous prizes, be entertained, enjoy a delicious dinner, and support AID/WATCH's important work as an independent watchdog on aid, trade and debt. Cost: \$35 waged/\$20 concession or \$50 for passionate supporters. Dinner is included and drinks are available.

6:30pm, The Workshop, 16 Sloane Street, Enmore. Bookings: 9557 8944 /0434 829 084 or ozzie@aidwatch.org.au.

17 December Messiah

Our Lady of the Rosary Cathedral, together with Hornsby Arts Council, is hosting an ecumenical performance of Handel's Messiah. The event is in aid of the Fr Paul Finucane Cobar Appeal. Cost: \$10 / \$20. **8pm, Our Lady of the Rosary Cathedral, 23 Yardley Avenue, Waitara.** Contact: 9985 7207.

20 December The Syringa Tree

A film about a family in South Africa during the Apartheid years. Pamela Glen plays all 26 characters in this moving exploration of racism, love, innocence, exile, and the spiritual connection between the earth and its people. Cost: \$5 / \$10. **3pm, Sydney Jewish Museum, 148 Darlinghurst Road, Darlinghurst.** Contact: 0406 308 492.

27 December Remember Gaza

A vigil organized by the Coalition for Justice and Peace in Palestine, one year after the invasion of Gaza. For more information go to www.coalitionforpalestine.org/gaza09.html

8 - 17 January Flickerfest: Stories on Human Rights

Short film festival Flickerfest presents the Australian premiere of this award-winning program. 22 internationally recognised filmmakers, artists and writers have joined forces to mark the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by each contributing a 3 minute short-movie inspired by the six themes of the Universal Declaration: culture, development, dignity and justice, environment, gender and participation. **Bondi Pavillion, Bondi Beach.** For more info go to www.flickerfest.com.au.

8 - 28 January Cross Cultural Summer School

A collaborative venture of the Sisters of St Joseph and St Columban's Mission Society, providing cross cultural preparation for ministry. This course provides theological, spiritual, psychological and social understandings for people crossing into an unfamiliar culture in aspects of their ministry Cost: \$2920. **St Joseph's Centre for Reflective Living, 64 MacKillop Drive, Baulkham Hills.** Contact: 02 9634 2317 or annie.bond@stjosephscentre.org.au.

14 - 30 January The Fence

The Sydney Festival presents this play about love, belonging and dispossession. The performance takes place in a purpose-built suburban home in Western Sydney and deals with the resilience and wisdom of five Australians, four of whom grew up in care as part of the Stolen Generations and Forgotten Australians. *The Fence* is directed by Alicia Talbot and was developed by artists working in consultation with indigenous and non-indigenous Australians with related experiences. **8:30pm, A backyard in Parramatta. Meeting point: Riverside Theatre, Parramatta.** For more info go to www.sydneyfestival.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.