



Act Justly

Religious lobby for complementary protection

Sisters seek protection for those facing torture and death

Religious sisters from Melbourne and Sydney made their way to Canberra in October to lobby parliament in support of a bill to improve protection for asylum seekers.

The sisters are members of Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH), and they are urging bipartisan support of the Complementary Protection Bill, which would make sanctuary available to asylum seekers who are at risk of being subjected to the most serious forms of harm in their countries of origin, but who do not fit the definition of the 'refugee' given in the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

While in Canberra, ACRATH met with Members of Parliament from both houses to urge bipartisan support for the Complementary Protection Bill. They shared with parliamentarians their experience of working with female victims of trafficking who have been denied protection as refugees but for whom returning home represents great danger.

Complementary protection would also give refuge to women who face female genital mutilation in their home country. Two such women, former World Youth Day pilgrims from Kenya, were refused protection earlier this year.

'ACRATH believes that Australia should never return people to a country where



Christine Carolan, Margaret Ng rsj, Tania De Jong rgs and Mary Mooney csb in the grounds of Parliament House

they would be persecuted, killed, tortured, or subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment,' says Sr Margaret Ng rsj, ACRATH member and coordinator of the Josephite Counter Trafficking Project.

'We are hopeful for a positive outcome for the Complementary Protection Bill which is in keeping with Australia's tradition of the protection of human rights and fulfilling of our obligations under international law.'

Church seeks compassion for asylum seekers

Recent controversies over the Government's handling of asylum seekers travelling to Australia by boat have moved Catholic leaders to speak out in response.

Bishop Joseph Grech, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference delegate for refugee and migrant issues, called on Australians to 'stop and think about asylum seekers, and why they were escaping their homeland' and to 'open our hearts to those who are suffering.' Bishop Grech's statement can be read at

www.catholic.org.au.

Bishop Kevin Manning of Parramatta and Bishop Pat Power of Canberra-Gouburn have also spoken out, while the Edmund Rice Centre has urged the government to ensure that asylum seekers are properly processed. ERC has documented the cases of asylum-seekers rejected by the previous government who have been killed after being returned to danger in their home countries, including Sri Lanka and Afghanistan.

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Mural reflects resilience of women and children coping with domestic violence

On Friday 16 October CatholicCare launched two special murals at its Canterbury and Arabic Family Support programme, Lakemba.

The murals were created as part of a project to enable women and their children from a variety of cultures who have, or are currently, experiencing relationship difficulties such as domestic violence, to gather in a safe environment to express how these difficulties have impacted on them and their families, to affirm and support each other, and learn strategies for moving forward.

In attendance were CatholicCare CEO Bernard Boerma, Director of CatholicCare's Children and Youth Services, Maureen Eagles, Mayor of Canterbury Robert Furolo and Deputy Mayor Fadwa Kebbe.

The Canterbury and Arabic Family support programme is an early intervention and prevention service that aims to im-



prove family functioning through short or long term contact with support workers. This programme provides families with the opportunity to learn new skills and make positive changes in their lives. These changes result in a better quality of life, safety and improved parenting.

Papal recognition for Sydney priests

Sydney's newest monsignors are Mons. John Usher and Mons. Neil Brown, both members of the Justice and Peace Advisory Council for the Archdiocese.

Mons. Usher is Chancellor of the Archdiocese, and was Director of Centacare (now CatholicCare) for 21 years. Mons. Brown is a moral theologian, specialising in Catholic social teaching and taught for 34 years at the Catholic Institute of Sydney. He is currently parish priest of St Anne's, Bondi Beach.

The new monsignors were announced on 23 October. Cardinal Pell said "Monsignor Usher and Monsignor Brown are highly respected by the priests and people of the Archdiocese, and command immense respect and affection from the people they have served in the course of their priesthood."

Mental health nurse needed for East Timor

Palms Australia sends skilled volunteers, to requesting communities in the Asia-Pacific region as well in Africa. Palms is seeking a nurse with mental health experience to volunteer for on Atauro Island, East Timor.

Atauro Island is 25km from the East Timorese mainland. This strip of water isolates the people of Atauro from adequate health and medical care.

In 2006 Palms country representative, Barry Hinton, lost his wife Nema and their unborn child when Nema suffered sudden seizures due to Eclampsia. Access to life-saving drugs in Dili was made impossible due to storms in the waters around Atauro.

Palms Australia is working to build up health system in places like Atauro Island so that simple problems like this don't spiral out of control. Right now the communities of Atauro are requesting a mental health nurse to help them with their medical needs. If you are interested in this 2 year placement please go to www.palms.org.au or call 9518 9551.

What does Christ born in a stable have to say to a world marred by consumerism, war and oppression? This month the Justice and Peace Office is releasing a short resource for parishes and communities to hope and work for justice this Christmas, and a special Advent reflection day will follow in December. For more info, contact Chantelle at chantelle.ogilvie@sydneycatholic.org, or watch this space!

Parishes gather for justice

On October 17 parish representatives from around Sydney came together at the Australian Catholic University, Strathfield for the second Archdiocesan Gathering of Parish Social Justice Groups and Contacts.

Approximately 30 parishioners took part in the day, which coincided with the International

Day for the Eradication of Poverty. Participants broke open this theme with reflections on homelessness in Sydney and a workshop from international aid and development agency, Caritas Australia. Margareta Brosnan and Celia Carroll from Caritas led the group in a pledge as part of Stand Up, an international campaign to eradicate poverty. Over 173 million people took part in Stand Up worldwide, setting a Guinness World Record.

Other highlights included inspiring presentations from active groups building justice in Marrickville and Menai parishes, as well as one to one conversations in which participants explored their personal story and motivation to act.





Be part of the promise!

Nine years ago, the world made a promise, to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger by 2015. Volunteer with Caritas and be part of that promise!

Blueprint for a Better World: the Millennium Development goals and you is an interactive exhibition, presented by Caritas Australia in partnership with AusAID. It has a particular focus on development programs in Papua New Guinea, Cambodia, and Africa and provides a practical insight into the eight Millennium Development Goals.

Blueprint for a Better World is coming to Sydney in February and Caritas is looking for volunteers to help put together creative and exciting activities and events when the exhibition is in town. If you're interested in making a change and standing up against poverty, contact exhibition coordinator Alex Engel on alexandraa@caritas.org.au to find out more!

www.blueprintforabetterworld.org

What's on around Sydney

3 November JRS Melbourne Cup Luncheon

Dress up for the races and raise money for Jesuit Refugee Services and its work with asylum-seekers and refugees. Cost: \$105.

11:30am, Dockside, Cockle Bay Wharf, Darling Harbour. Bookings: 9356 3888 or go to www.jrs.org.au

5 November 2009 Sydney Peace Prize: John Pilger

Author and journalist John Pilger presents this year's Sydney Peace Prize lecture. Cost: \$20 /\$25. **8:00pm - 9:30pm, Concert Hall, Sydney Opera House, Bennelong Point, Sydney.** For more info go to www.sydneypeacefoundation.org.au.

4 November Defending Melanesian Land

Join AID/WATCH for an evening of film, photos and discussions about the importance of customary land. **6:30pm, Amnesty International Australia NSW Action Centre, 79 Myrtle Street, Chippendale.** Contact: 9557 8994 or gary@aidwatch.org.au

6 November After the Financial Crisis: Do we need a people's bank?

Politics in the Pub presents Professor John Quiggin, Queensland University, and David Richardson, the Australia Institute. **6pm - 7:45pm, The Gaelic Club, Level 1, 64 Devonshire Street, Surry Hills.** For more info go to www.politicsinthepub.org.au.

7 November Requiem mass for those who died in East Timor

Bishop David Cremin will celebrate this mass for the repose of souls of all Timorese who died during the Dili massacre, and for Australian soldiers who have died in East Timor in and since WWII. **10:30am, Mary MacKillop Chapel, Mount St, North Sydney.** Contact 9623 2847 or sc@mmiets.org.au.

10 November Business Ethics Breakfast: Ethical Decisions in Sports Business

The Edmund Rice Centre presents Des Halser, Manly football coach on the ethical challenges of professional sport. Cost: \$45, \$40 for members and students. **7:30pm - 9:00pm, Dooley's Catholic Club, 24 John St, Lidcombe.** Contact: 8762 4200 or busethics@erc.org.au.

10 November Who would Jesus bomb?

Newtown Spirituality in the Pub presents former human shield and Coordinator of the Edmund Rice Network Donna Mulhearn, exploring the radical Christian notion of loving your enemies and doing good to those who hurt you. (Mth 5:44). **7.30pm - 9pm, the Bald Faced Stag Hotel, 345 Parramatta Road, Leichhardt.** Contact: 9230 7631 or aclevana@mooball.com

12 November 10 Years Since the WTO in Seattle

A fundraiser for the Australian Fair Trade & Investment Network. Includes vegetarian food, images and stories from the Seattle demonstrations. Cost: \$20. **6:00pm, Sydney Mechanics School of Arts, Level 1, 280 Pitt St, Sydney.** For more info and to book go to www.aftinet.org.au.

What's on around Sydney (cont.)

13 November Labour and Justice

The launch of a new book on Catholic social thought by Gavan Duffy. Cardinal George Pell will launch the book and the author will respond. **6:30pm, Catholic Adult Education Centre, 3 Keating St, Lidcombe.** Contact: 9643 3660 or maree@caec.com.au.

13 November Juvenile Justice: Why is it failing and what should be done?

Politics in the Pub presents NSW Minister for Juvenile Justice, Graham West MP, and Professor Chris Cuneen, Faculty of Law UNSW. **6pm - 7:45pm, The Gaelic Club, Level 1, 64 Devonshire Street, Surry Hills.** For more info go to www.politicsinthepub.org.au.

14 November Social Justice in Action

A conference hosted by SJ Around the Bay and the St Vincent de Paul Society Broken Bay featuring speakers, parish and conference displays, workshops and a forum. **10am - 5pm, Our Lady of the Rosary Primary School Hall, 23 Yardley Ave, Wai-tara.** Contact: 9415 1492 or lily.basdeo@vinnies.org.au

8 - 15 November Walking Together Exhibition

A creative arts exhibition to celebrate the launch of the Edmund Rice Centre's Lilla International Women's Network. Female artists from a range of backgrounds respond to issues they face in their everyday lives. **4:00pm, Mori Gallery, 168 Day St, Sydney.** For more info go to www.create.lilla.org.au.

18 November Reconnecting the Community with the Planning System

A workshop funded by the Department of Planning NSW and facilitated by the Environmental Defender's Office and Total Environment Centre. **5:00pm - 9:00pm, Sydney Mechanics School of Arts, Level 1, 280 Pitt St, Sydney.** Contact: 9261 3437.

18 November Civilising Globalisation: Human Rights and the Global Economy

A conversation with Michael Kirby about the need for human rights standards to influence global trade and aid. Cost: \$7 / 10. **6:30pm - 8:00pm, Gleebooks, 49 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe.** For more info go to www.gleebooks.com.au.

18 - 23 November Justice Fast Advent Program

Activ8 Justice is hosting this 6 week program, put together by Micah Challenge. Topics include repentance and hope, aid justice, climate justice and governance, among others. **Wednesday nights, 7:30pm - 9:00pm, Our Lady Star of the Sea Parish Centre, 50 Kiora Rd, Miranda.** Contact: jenni.downes@yahoo.com.au

20 November Christmas in Peru

Learn about the Sisters of St Joseph Peruvian Project, enjoy food and music, and purchase fair trade gifts. Cost: \$15. **5:30pm - 8:00pm, Auditorium, Mary MacKillop Place, 9 Mount St, North Sydney.** Contact: 8912 2716 or gina.bradley@sosj.org.au

21 November CatholicCare Spring Race Day

Enjoy great food and refreshments, prizes for the best dressed, auctions and raffles while raising money for the CatholicCare Early Childhood Intervention and Foster Care programs. Cost: \$140. **Rosehill Gardens Racecourse.** Contact: 9390 5377 or dugaldpowe@catholiccare.org.

27 November Globalisation and the Church: Reflections on *Caritas in Veritate*

Presentations from Sandie Cornish, Associate Professor Tracie Rowland, Rev Dr Bruce Duncan, Duncan McLaren, Cardinal Cordes and Jack de Groot. **4:00pm - 9:00, Australian Catholic University, Berry St, North Sydney.** Contact: encyclicalconference@acu.edu.au.

27 November Inaugural Bernie Banton Foundation Dinner

Help raise money to support asbestos affected people and their families, promote research into asbestos-related diseases and lobby for justice and the rights of sufferers. **6:30pm, Doltone House, Darling Island Wharf, 48 Pirrama Rd, Pyrmont.** Contact: 8850 1223 or info@berniebantton.com.au. For more info go to www.berniebantton.com.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.