



Act Justly

State Apology Marks 30th Anniversary of Romero Assassination

Easter message echoed in the story of Archbishop Romero

El Salvador's President Mauricio Funes has made an official apology for the murder of Archbishop Oscar Romero by a right-wing hit squad 30 years ago.

"I am seeking pardon in the name of the state," Mr Funes said at a new mural honouring Oscar Romero at El Salvador's international airport.

The event is still raw in the memory of those who worked with, received support from and loved the Archbishop.

Sister Luz Isabel Cueva witnessed the assassination of Romero as he celebrated Mass on 24 March 1980.

"When he finished his sermon, he walked to the middle of the altar; at that moment, the shot rang out," she says. "It sounded like a bomb explosion. Monsignor Romero held on to the cloth on the altar for a moment and pulled it off. Then he fell backwards and lay bleeding at the feet of Christ."

Romero became a target for speaking out against the then routine executions, kidnappings and torture of the rural poor and activists who opposed El Salvador's right-wing government.

His fellow priests who also promoted Catholic Social Teaching became targets. The slogan "Be a Patriot - Kill a Priest" was written on many walls around El Salvador to intimidate the clergy to support the regime.



Romero's story is pertinent at Lent and Easter as he was an unlikely advocate for the poor. Initially he tacitly supported the regime until the murder of his friend and brother priest Fr. Rutilio Grande galvanized him to seek answers and take action. His Easter-like sacrifice was preceded by a Lenten-like conversion experience.

While no one has ever been convicted of Romero's murder, a UN truth commission accused Roberto D'Aubuisson, a former army officer who died in 1992, of ordering the assassination.

Thirty years later Romero and his message are as popular as ever. Omionn is a local hip hop artist who wrote a song about Romero. He believes that Oscar Romero's widespread presence on T-shirts, murals and in music means the attempt to silence him has failed.

"What his killer did was to keep three generations thinking about him", the artist says. Or as Romero himself prophesied, "If I'm killed I will rise again in the Salvadorean people".

'Whoever offers their life out of love for Christ, and in service to others, will live like the seed that dies ... May this immolated body and this blood sacrificed for all nourish us so that we may offer our body and our blood as Christ did, and thus bring justice and peace to our people. Let us join together, then, in the faith and hope of this intimate moment of prayer ... You can tell people, if they succeed in killing me, I forgive and bless those who do it. Hopefully, they will realize that they are wasting their time. A bishop will die, but the Church of God, which is the people, will never perish.'

Archbishop Oscar Romero

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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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Courage against violence in Iraq

February 2 saw the launch of *Ordinary Courage*, the first book from Donna Mulhearn about her experiences as a human shield in Iraq.

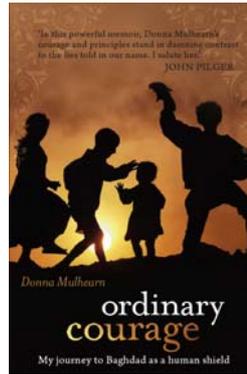
Ordinary Courage tells Donna's story of being motivated by her Christian faith to leave a safe life in Australia and become a human shield in Baghdad. Her commitment to non-violent action saw her confront pleas and protests from her friends, falling missiles at night, and accusations at home that she was a 'traitor.'

While in Iraq, Donna witnessed the daily impacts of war on civilian life. This is the story of the 2003 invasion told not through the lens of CNN or an international media outlet but by

someone who was there, who saw the 'ordinary courage' of Iraqis caught in the middle and who summoned courage in herself.

Donna Mulhearn now works with the Edmund Rice network, engaging young people in social justice.

For more info go to www.ordinarycourage.org



Around the Parishes

Shire Churches call on Council to Go Fair Trade

Parishioners at Holy Family Menai are joining with other Christian Churches in the Sutherland Shire to call on the their local council to make the shire a Fair Trade Community.

Holy Family parishioners have been collecting signatures at their regular fair trade stall after mass, which they will present together to their local council. Becoming a Fair Trade Community will mean that the council commits to working with local businesses, organizations and individuals to promote the availability and use of fair trade products.

On Being Giraffes: Parishes and social justice

On March 6 parish social justice groups from around Sydney were told that working for social justice is like being a

giraffe. A giraffe is someone who sticks his or her neck out. Catholic giraffes stick out their necks for others.

The advice was given to parishioners by Duncan McLaren during a presentation on Catholic Social Teaching. Duncan coordinates ACU's Thai-Burma refugee education program and was formerly Secretary General of Caritas Internationalis.

Duncan addressed parishioners at the third Archdiocesan gathering of parish social justice groups and contacts. At this meeting, parishioners again had an

opportunity to meet, pray, learn and support each other.

Participants heard case studies from Catholic Church, Coogee, and St Patrick's Catholic Church Summer Hill, and were inspired by their service, awareness-raising and fundraising work for refugees, peace and people with mental illness.

Also on the day, parishioners celebrated lunch with a Survive Past Five birthday party action to tackle infant mortality with Micah Challenge.



Helping Children Survive Past Five

Last year, 8.8 million children died before their 5th birthday, most from easily preventable causes. Micah Challenge is inviting communities and to call on the Australian Government to contribute our fair share to the global effort needed to prevent child deaths by holding a 'Survive Past Five' 5th birthday party.

Your 'party' could be a meal with family and friends, a morning tea after church or at work, even an agenda item at your next social justice meeting – or you could plan an event for your local community! To hold a party, you simply need to:

Choose a date and place and register your 5th birthday party online at www.micahchallenge.org.au/fifthbirthdayaction

Order birthday cards or a DVD to use at your party.

At your party, show the dvd or let people know about the issues as well as the progress that's already been made. Ask people to sign the birthday cards and take a photo. You could also plan some party activities – the Micah Challenge website has some great ideas for party games that focus on child health.

Follow up your party by sending a copy of the photo and story of how your party went to info@micahchallenge.org.au. Then send the signed birthday cards and photo to your local MP, telling them that you care about the issue, and asking them to pass the cards onto the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Stephen Smith.

All the info you need is online at www.micahchallenge.org.au or contact nsw@micahchallenge.org.au.



Pace Bene Australia presents
The Spirituality and Practice of Non-violent leadership

An 8 Day residential program for
Church leaders, clergy and lay

Module 1: *The Inner Journey of Non-violent Leadership*, 8 –13 Aug OR 29 Aug – 3 Sept, Mudaring, WA

Module 2: *The Tool-kit for Non-violent Leadership*, 14 –17 Nov, Sydney / Melbourne (TBC)

Cost: \$1400

Contact mckean.brendan@gmail.com or 0429 448 090.



Simplicity and Justice at Lent

On Saturday 27 March 40 people gathered for a Lenten afternoon hosted by the Justice and Peace Office at St Mary's Catholic Church in Erskineville. It was a time to hear from two inspiring speakers, Paul Ghanem OFM and Jenni Hickson and an opportunity for prayer, conversation and companionship in the lead up to Easter.

The theme for the gathering was *Emptying Out*, and it aimed to make connections between Lenten ideas of letting go and turning back, and the need to live justly and as stewards of the earth.

Fr Paul opened the reflection with a Franciscan (or interpretation of ecology. Starting at Genesis, he put a compelling case forward that while 'ecology' is a relatively new concept, the need to care for our world is both ancient and shared by the three great Abrahamic faiths. The basis for our care for the environment, Fr Paul said, is the goodness of what God has cre-

is poured out in Christ and which we ourselves are called to mirror.

Following this Jenni Hickson, shared her moving personal journey towards love and authenticity in her work for justice. Jenni has worked with young people in the area of faith formation, spirituality and justice, for both the St Vincent de Paul Society and the Australian Jesuits.

Jenni shared how an almost compulsive desire 'help' can mature into a genuine appreciation of the dignity of each person. Her message of profound simplicity and power complimented Fr Paul's energetic talk about the need for ecological justice and conversion.

In addition to the speakers, participants had an opportunity to join in prayer and conversations. These were enriched by the presence of representatives from Catholic deaf and hearing impaired community, who shared with participants one of their particular ways of prayer.

What's on around Sydney

7 April I Feel Passionate about Global Justice

Paddington Spirituality in the Pub presents Ben Spies-Butcher, lecturer in economics and political sociology at Macquarie University, and Associate Professor Jennifer Burn, Senior Lecturer in Law at UTS. **7:30pm - 9pm, Upstairs Room, Bellevue Hotel, 159 Hargrave St, Paddington.** Contact: 0414 873 910.

9 April Making Sydney Sustainable - Food

A seminar exploring the impact of urbanisation on market garden and food production. Speakers include Lynn Saville (Sydney Food Fairness Alliance), Aaron Gadiel (Urban Taskforce) and David Mason (NSW Dept of Primary Industries). **12:30pm – 2pm, DLA Phillips Fox, Level 38, 201 Elizabeth St, Sydney.** Contact: 9262 6989 or education@edo.org.au.

9 April The Politics of Disability: What should Rudd Deliver?

Politics in the Pub presents Bill Shorten, Parliamentary Secretary for Disability and Children's Services, and Rhonda Galbally OA, Chair, National Disability Advisory Council. **6pm to 7:45pm, The Gaelic Club, Level 1, 64 Devonshire St, Surry Hills.** For more info got to www.politicsinthepub.org.au.

10 April If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation

Rev Dr Sean McDonagh explores the challenge of Pope Benedict XVI's New Year peace message. Fr McDonagh is a Columban Missionary priest who has been writing and campaigning on ecology for 35 years. Respondents include Bishop Julian Porteous, Ms Sandra Menteith (lecturer in environmental ethics, Catholic Institute of Sydney) and Ms Emily Aitken (Waitara Parish youth leader). **5pm – 7pm, Thomas Aquinas Centre, Santa Sabina College, 90 The Boulevard, Strathfield.** Contact: 9352 8000 or cmi@columban.org.au.

What's on around Sydney (cont.)

10 April Celebration of African Cultures

Join more than 3000 people for colourful stalls, workshops, community information, performances, food and more, celebrating African culture. **11am – 4pm, Auburn Park, Auburn.** Contact: 0407 904 526 or africancultures@hotmail.com.

13 April IQ2 Debate: The Senate is Still Unrepresentative Swill

Speakers for the motion include Annabel Crabb, Peter Van Onselen and Sen Nick Sherry. Speakers against include Bob Brown, Professor Anne Twomey and Simon Sheik. Cost: \$32. **6:45pm - 8:30pm, Main Theatre, City Recital Hall, 2 Angel Place, Sydney.** For more info go to www.iq2oz.com or contact: 8256 2222.

13 April Towards a Social Ethos: Lindsay Mell

A conversation exploring contemporary perspectives about what is good in social terms. Cost: \$6 including coffee / tea. **7:30pm - 9pm, Fairtrade Coffee Company, 33 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe.** Contact: 9797 6459.

15 April Law, Governance and Social Justice

Do laws, legal processes and other aspects of governance help or hinder social justice? An address from the Hon. James Spigelman AC, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of NSW. **5:30pm - 7pm, Level 6, UNSW CBD Campus, 1 O'Connell St, Sydney.** Contact: 9385 9531.

16 April War Crimes in Sri Lanka – What Outcomes?

Politics in the Pub presents Dr Sam Pari, Tamil youth organizer, and Brami Jegan, Coordinator Sri Lanka Project, Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies and Sydney University. **6pm to 7:45pm, The Gaelic Club, Level 1, 64 Devonshire St, Surry Hills.** For more info got to www.politicsinthepub.org.au.

29 April After Copenhagen: Where now for the Pacific?

Join members of the Pacific Calling Partnership delegation to Copenhagen to discuss what was significant about this event, and how to move forward. Includes a short film and an opportunity to share and ask questions. **5:30pm - 8pm, The Edmund Rice Centre, 15 Henley Rd, Homebush West.** Contact: jillf@erc.org.au.

6 May Ridgeline to River: A Discovery Tour of Parramatta River

An environmental education tour hosted by Earth Foundation Australia Ltd, a non-profit environmental education foundation. Cost: \$50 including morning tea and resources. **10am - 1pm, departing Sydney Olympic Park Wharf.** Contact: kate-hughes@bordnet.com.au.

7 May The Unheard Story: Poverty and Human Rights

Politics in the Pub presents Stuart Rees, Director of the Sydney Peace Foundation, and Claire Mallinson, Amnesty International. **6pm to 7:45pm, The Gaelic Club, Level 1, 64 Devonshire St, Surry Hills.** For more info got to www.politicsinthepub.org.au.

7 - 13 May Women's International Peace Walk (Sydney Leg)

Footprints for Peace invites women to join in a journey of walking from Brisbane to Canberra in solidarity for a nuclear-free future. Men are also invited in a supporting role. Bring bikes, music, banners and good humour. Come along for a single step or the whole walk. A celebration of the resilience and spirit of Sudanese migrants and refugees now living in Blacktown. Hear and see their stories, in the community's own words. Go to www.footprintsforpeace.net for the itinerary and more info..

11 May Catholic Schools and the Church of the Poor

Author and theologian Dr James Nickoloff offers this presentation for educators, school leaders, board members and other interested people. Dr Nicholoff is Adjunct Professor of Theology at Barry University, Miami. **10am - 3:15pm, St Patrick's College, Francis St, Strathfield.** Contact: Dmulhearn@edmundrice.org.

14 May The Burden of Debt: How Serious and Who will Pay?

Politics in the Pub presents Dr Jim Stanford, author of *Economics for Everyone*, and Associate Professor Steve Keen, author of *De-bunking Economics*. **6pm to 7:45pm, The Gaelic Club, Level 1, 64 Devonshire St, Surry Hills.** For more info got to www.politicsinthepub.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.