



Act Justly

Discovering care for the earth

A course in faith and the environment reveals our 'ecological vocation'

In April this year, Chantelle Ogilvie, on behalf of the Justice and Peace Office, took part in the third annual Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Course, offered by the Franciscan Friars and the Pontificia Università Antonianum. The course, which took place in Rome from April 20 to 30, brought together Franciscan friars and lay people from around the world for ten days of learning and reflection on Catholic Social Teaching, spirituality and ecology.

The course program encompassed both theological and practical issues. Thirteen lecturers, from the fields of theology, economics, law and science, shared their expertise on topics such as the biblical roots of ecological concern, the development of environmental awareness in the Church, international legal instruments for environmental protection, water, climate change and agro-fuels. Participants themselves also brought a range of experiences from places as diverse as Pakistan, Germany and the Amazon.

'Learning from these people was a real privilege', said Chantelle. 'They have a genuine grasp of what it means for us to have an ecological vocation – that as human beings we are both part of creation and called to be its stewards – and they live this calling, in their own lives and with the local communities they serve.'

For Chantelle, the key learning of the JPIC Course involved the interdependence of justice, peace and ecology. For example, environmental destruc-



tion has a significant impact on human health and adds to existing numbers of refugees worldwide.

Furthermore, as Pope Benedict stated in his message for the 2007 World Day of Peace, 'It becomes more and more evident that there is an inseparable link between peace with creation and peace among men.' The degradation of resources and their unbalanced distribution creates competition and conflict among peoples.

Course participants found inspiration in the life of St Francis of Assisi whose way of following Christ combined a commitment to poverty, peace and respect for creation. Rector of the Antonianum, Dr Johannes Freyer O.F.M., described Francis as 'a strong provocation' to the people of his time and of today.

Francis' poverty in particular resonated with many. Comparing Francis' path and convictions to their increasingly consumeristic societies, participants saw the need for more responsible lifestyles and for economic approaches that take into account the finite resources of the earth.

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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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International aid and development and the 2009 Federal Budget

The Make Poverty History Coalition's budget response

The Federal Government's 2009 budget, announced on May 12, has received much comment to date from political commentators, economists and ordinary Australians. On May 13 the NGOs, churches and community groups which make up the Make Poverty History coalition also offered their response, to the budget's overseas aid component.

"Australia's aid budget is a product of the difficult times it has been forged in, but still provides a solid base for more ambitious aid growth in coming years," said Andrew Hewett, Make Poverty History co-chair.

The Federal Government increased its

aid budget from \$3.66 billion last year to \$3.82 billion in 2009, a welcome move according to Mr Hewett. "The government has stuck to its promise and spared the aid budget from dramatic cuts."

However the rate of increase was lower than previously anticipated, setting back the government's timetable for reaching an overseas aid level of 0.5% of GNI by 2015.

According to Make Poverty History, other strong points in the budget include renewed attention on maternal and child health, with funding of \$370 million dollars.

"Initiatives such as increased numbers of skilled birth attendants will have a very real impact on the lives of women living in poverty," said Mr Hewett, "and will go a long way towards rectifying the appalling child and maternal mortality rates in our region – this is a tremendous result."

At the same time Make Poverty History has expressed disappointment that no new money has been allocated to climate change adaptation and mitigation.

"If we do not equip poor communities to deal with climate change, we risk undoing decades of development work," said Mr Hewett.

One of the greatest injustices in the contemporary world consists precisely in this: that the ones who possess much are relatively few and those who possess almost nothing are many. It is the injustice of the poor distribution of the goods and services originally intended for all.

Pope John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*

Ecological concern brings faiths together

The Australian Religious Response to Climate Change is a multi-faith network committed to action

Established in 2008, the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change is a multi-faith network aimed at galvanizing faith-based responses to climate change and empowering faith communities to become environmentally sustainable. ARRCC educates faith communities on issues relating to climate change and supports them to advocate for sustainability in public policy.

According to ARRCC, 'faith communities are people of common values, connected with place, who have a concern for the



common good.' ARRCC believes that religions can provide moral and spiritual impetus for addressing climate change.

Check out ARRCC's website for resources and action ideas, or to become an ARRCC member:

www.arrcc.org.au

New appointment to Advisory Council

In May Frank Malloy from the Catholic Education Office joined the Archdiocesan Justice and Peace Advisory Council.

The role of the Council is to advise the Archbishop of Sydney on matters relating to justice, peace and ecology and to support the work of the Justice and Peace Office.

Mr Malloy is currently Regional Director for the Inner Western Region of the CEO. Other members of the Advisory Council include Dr Michael Costigan (Chair), Fr Neil Brown, Fr John Usher, Mrs Maureen Eagles, Mrs Elsie Heiss and Dr Steven Lovell-Jones (Justice and Peace Promoter).

The Sydney Alliance is a new long term coalition between civil society organizations including religious organizations, trade unions and community groups. The aim of the Alliance is to rebuild civil society and support communities to take action for the common good. It offers training of local leaders and the chance to shape and be part of a broad campaign for positive change in Sydney. The Justice and Peace Office is looking for parishes and communities who want to get involved. Want to know more? Contact us!

What's on around Sydney

25 May – 5 June Blueprint for a Better World: The Millennium Development Goals and You

This interactive travelling multimedia exhibition gives a practical face to the Millennium Development Goals, highlighting what Caritas Australia is doing to tackle poverty. **10am - 4pm Weekdays, The Atrium, Auburn Council, Civic Place, 1 Susan Street, Auburn.** Contact: 1800 024 413 or beckys@caritas.org.au.

27 May - 20 June My Name is Rachel Corrie

A play based on the journals and personal correspondence of a 23 year old American peace activist who was killed in Israel in 2003. Cost: \$19 - \$34. **Seymour Theatre Centre, corner of Cleveland Street and City Road, Chippendale.** Contact: 9351 7940. More info at www.seymour.usyd.edu.au/boxoffice/bite_rachel09.shtml

2 June How we can better protect Indigenous Rights in Australia?

This public lecture celebrates the UN International Year of Reconciliation. Speakers include Megan Davis, Indigenous Law Centre, UNSW; Steven Ross, Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations, and Dr. Sarah Pritchard, NSW Barrister. **6pm - 8pm, NSW Teachers Federation Building, 39 - 41 Reservoir Street, Surry Hills.** RSVP: nswrc@daa.nsw.gov.au.

2 June Torture and Democracy: What Now?

Professor of Political Science Darius Rejali traces the history of torture over the last century, and reaches some startling conclusions. Cost: \$20/\$15. **6:30pm - 8pm, Seymour Theatre Centre, corner of Cleveland Street and City Road, Chippendale.** Contact: 9351 7940. More info and bookings at www.usyd.edu.au/sydney_ideas.

3 June Reconciliation Week Living Library & Concert

Share reconciliation stories, enjoy Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander music and dance performances or borrow a 'live' book (Indigenous and non-Indigenous members of Local Reconciliation Groups & communities) for a 15 min conversation about reconciliation. **10am - 3pm, Martin Place.** Contact: 9219 0719.

3 June What's spirituality got to do with capitalism?

Paddington Spirituality in the Pub presents Dr Alison Healy, member of the Global Justice Network of *The Grail* in Australia and Peter Sheahan, young international motivational speaker. **7:30 pm - 9:00 pm, Bellevue Hotel, 159 Hargrave St, Paddington.** Contact: 9387 3152.

5 June Green Transformers – Your Planet Needs You! Children's Art Exhibition

Celebrate World Environment Day at the launch of this exhibition of fine art and digital art by children. **3:30pm - 4:30pm, Carriageworks, 245 Wilson Street, Eveleigh.** Contact: 9245 1503.

7 June Sorry Day, National Reconciliation Week and World Environment Day Mass

Erskineville Parish is celebrating this special liturgy commemorating Sorry Day, National Reconciliation Week and World Environment Day. **9am - 10am, Our Lady of Perpetual Succour Catholic Church, 21 Swanson Street, Erskineville.**

9 June The Right to Social Participation of Children with Disabilities in China

The UNSW Social Policy Research Centre presents this seminar exploring the experiences of children and young people with disability in China. **12:30pm – 1:30 pm, Level 2, Room 250, Robert Webster Building (G14), UNSW, Kensington.** Contact: 9385 7817 or sprcseminars@unsw.edu.au.

13 June The G20: What will it deliver?

Politics in the Pub presents this conversation with Stephen Long, ABC journalist and Ross Buckley, Policy Adviser to Jubilee Australia. Cost: \$5 to become social member of Gaelic Club. **6pm - 7:45pm, Gaelic Club, Level 1, 64 Devonshire Street, Surry Hills.** Contact: 9358 4834 or tomspandb@bigpond.com. More info at www.politicsinthepub.org.au.

16 June Climate Change: Religious Perspectives on Action

Speakers include Imam Afroz Ali, Founder Al-Ghazzali Centre for Islamic Sciences and Human Development; Dr Miriam

What's on around Sydney (cont.)

Pepper, Member, Australian Religious Response to Climate Change; and Dr Ben-Zion Weiss, teacher and community educator with a PhD on ecology of culture. **6:30pm-8:00pm, Theatre, Waverley Library, 32-48 Denison St, Bondi Junction.** Contact: 9369 8112. More info at www.waverley.nsw.gov.au/greenlinks/Green.

17 June **Refugee Week 2009: Freedom from Fear at Jesuit Refugee Service**

Celebrate the resilience and creative spirit of refugees and asylum-seekers with this barbecue, performance and art-exhibition. **11am - 2pm, JRS roof terrace, 24 Roslyn Street, Elizabeth Bay.** Contact: 9356 3888

18 June **Refugee Week 2009: Liverpool Street Festival**

CatholicCare's Refugee Employment Program will be participating in this festival to remember the journey of refugees.. **10am - 2pm, Liverpool Mall, Liverpool.** Contact: 9725 7077.

18 - 19 June **Vinnies CEO Sleepout**

As part of its Winter Appeal, the St Vincent de Paul Society is inviting business and community leaders to experience life on the streets, first-hand. Participate, donate or nominate to be part of this event. **7pm - 7am, Luna Park, Alfred Street South, Milsons Point.** More info at www.ceosleepout.org.au.

27 June **Jesuit Refugee Service Winter Solstice Ball**

A black-tie event organized by young people for young people. All proceeds go towards local and international projects with refugees and asylum-seekers. Cost: \$150. **7pm, Hilton Hotel, 488 George Street, Sydney.** Contact: 9356 3888.

4 - 16 July **NAIDOC Week Poster Exhibition**

An exhibition of NAIDOC Week posters from the 1960s to the present, exemplifying indigenous art and recording the struggles of indigenous Australians. **7pm, Waterloo Library, 770 Elizabeth Street, Waterloo.** Contact: 9288 5688.

8 - 10 July **An inclusive society? Practicalities and Possibilities**

The 2009 Australian Social Policy Conference includes international and local key note speakers including Tom Calma. \$570 for full conference. **9am 7 July - 4pm 10 July, University of New South Wales, Kensington.** Contact: 9414 4970.

10 July **The refugee crisis: Promoting humanity or reigniting fear?**

Politics in the Pub presents this conversation with Professor Mary Crock, International Law, University of Sydney, and David Bitel, Specialist Immigration Lawyer. Cost: \$5 to become social member of Gaelic Club. **6pm - 7:45pm, Gaelic Club, Level 1, 64 Devonshire Street, Surry Hills.** Contact: 9358 4834 or tomspandb@bigpond.com. More info at www.politicsinthepub.org.au.

11 - 13 July **Power Shift 2009**

The first national youth climate summit, hosted by Australian Youth Climate Coalition with the University of Western Sydney. 3000 young people from around Australia will gather for three days of decisive action. Cost: \$90. **8:30am 11 July - 7:30pm 13 July, University of Western Sydney Parramatta.** More info at www.powershift.org.au.

14 July **Preferential Love for the Poor**

A workshop from the Loyola Institute led by Sandie Cornish. Cost: Free for anyone involved in the work of the Australian Jesuits; suggested contribution for others wishing to participate \$50. **Time and venue to be confirmed.** Contact: 8920 0202 or loyola@loyola.org.au. More info at www.faiithdoingjustice.com.au.

20 July **When rights are threatened**

North Sydney Spirituality in the Pub presents Cathy Salmon and Marion Le. **7:30 pm - 9:00 pm, Union Hotel, corner of Pacific Highway and West Street, North Sydney.** Contact: 9958 5963.

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.