



Inside this issue:

Season of Creation 1

Asylum Seekers

Prominent Australians  
Speak Out 2

Presentation People

Take Action 2

Signs of Hope 3

More Bridges to Cross

Invisible Children 4

Abuse of Children in

Detention 4

**We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we live. We acknowledge their deep spiritual connections to this land and we thank them for the care they have shown to Earth over thousands of years.**

In answering the question, “Who is my neighbour?” Brian Patrick writes that “it is not only the Samaritan, the outcast or my enemy, but also the dolphin, the whale and the rainforest. Our neighbour is the entire community of life, the entire universe. We must love it as ourself.” (Elizabeth Johnson). This newsletter reflects this belief.

*Peta Anne Molloy, Anne Shay*

The **Season of Creation** originated in Australia and is now celebrated around the world for four weeks in September culminating on the feast of St Francis of Assisi, 4 October.

United with our Orthodox brothers and sisters, and with the support of other Churches and Christian communities, the Catholic Church today marks the “World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation”. This day offers “individual believers and communities a fitting opportunity to reaffirm their personal vocation to be stewards of

creation, to thank God for the wonderful handiwork which He has entrusted to our care, and to implore his help for the protection of creation as well as his pardon for the sins committed against the world in which we live. Pope Francis: Message for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation 1/9/16

Cultivating a sense of wonder leads us into the very mystery of existence, into the miraculous. I invite you to throw off the constraints of your remembered past and live with a searching eye and heart towards the miraculous. If you look you will find that we are surrounded by miracles. I invite you this month to make wonder a practice and let it lead you into the mystery of being itself. Who would you be if you committed yourself to not knowing, but wondering?

*Michael Stone*

Earth is humble. Patiently over billions of years it has made life to spring forth and its cycles uphold human life. The soil, plants, oceans and very air we breathe are gifts of Earth evolved and tested over eons.

We are invited to remember that our life and the gifts of Earth spring from God. We are invited to build our lives and care for Earth, attentive to the Wisdom of God’s Spirit.

[www.columban.org.au](http://www.columban.org.au)

In his poem *What did you do, once you knew*, American poet Drew Dellinger relates that dreams of his great, great, grand-children disturb his sleep, asking him :



How would you respond to your great, great, grand-child to be born in 2070:

**“What did you do once you knew?”**

**What did you do while the planet was plundered and Earth was unravelling?**

Read Drew’s poem at [http://turningpoint.consciouselders.org/our\\_grandchildrens\\_future](http://turningpoint.consciouselders.org/our_grandchildrens_future)

We tune our ears to the wisdom of the Earth. It is deep prayer, this listening to her cries, as Spirit sighs, too deep for words. Unborn generations call to us from the future: What did you do when the planet could no longer bear your foolishness and began to break?

*Bruce Sanguin*

There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.

*Albert Einstein*

Look up at the stars and not down at your feet. Try to make sense of what you see, and wonder about what makes the universe exist. Be curious.

*Stephen Hawking*

# *The Cry of the Poor ...*

## *Voices for Asylum Seekers and Displaced Peoples*

### *A Call from Prominent Australians*

In an open letter, Frank Brennan, Tim Costello, Robert Manne and John Menadue call on our political leaders to end the suffering of asylum seekers on Nauru and Manus Island.

In commenting on this letter, Frank Brennan states: “The suggestion that those camps need to remain filled in order to send a message to people smugglers so that the boats will stay stopped is not only morally unacceptable; it is strategically questionable.”

Boats have stopped arriving because they have been intercepted by the navy. Since the beginning of Operation Sovereign Borders in 2013, 25 boats carrying 698 asylum seekers have been turned back. This defies the claim that we need Manus and Nauru to send a signal to asylum seekers.

We join the call of these four Australians in saying “It’s time for Turnbull, Shorten and Di Natale to agree on a timetable. If the government is unable to resettle the proven refugees elsewhere in countries like New Zealand and Canada by the end of the year, the refugees should be resettled in Australia. If there are still asylum seekers awaiting determination of their claims by the end of the year, they should be brought to Christmas Island for processing.

To keep them any longer on Nauru and Manus Island is to tempt fate adverse to their interests, adverse to the national interest of PNG and Nauru, and adverse to Australia’s international standing and sense of ourselves.”

*Eureka Street 15/8/16*

**Suggested action. Write to your local Federal member in support of their call.**

### **Presentation People Support Asylum Seekers**

Presentation People from the Ballina group attended the Rally to remember the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tampa - a defining moment in the history of our treatment of asylum seekers. About 90 people attended and were moved by the accounts of the suffering of those incarcerated on Manus and Nauru. The speakers, Nathan Willis and Cath Napier, had both worked in these detention Centres.

Anne Shay pbvm Lismore

Anne Jordan and Margaret Walsh were recently privileged to witness the dedication of the senior and younger men and women who led a day long rally in front of QVB Sydney, reading the files of those who had experienced the plight of the Refugees in detention at Nauru and Manus Island.

Margaret Walsh pbvm Lismore

Victorian Presentation Sisters and friends joined the large crowd who gathered to hear the pain-filled stories about asylum seekers on Nauru and Manus Island. One of the speakers was a teacher who had recently returned from Nauru. She was risking her job as a teacher by speaking out on behalf of others. In an action of solidarity with asylum seekers, the crowd raised their arms, making a pattern similar to the wire around the camps. As we marched through the city, a larger crowd than usual lined the streets clapping, taking photographs and adding words of encouragement, obviously in solidarity with the Asylum Seekers.

Joan Kennedy pbvm Victoria

“(On Nauru) We don’t see the best of human nature, we only see the worst. We only see the complete desperation and demoralisation all the time, there’s a sense of hopelessness.”

*Paul Stevenson, psychologist and traumatologist*

Explore the Nauru Files online:

[www.theguardian.com/news/series/nauru-files](http://www.theguardian.com/news/series/nauru-files)

Read Mark Isaacs’ book, *The Undesirables*, an account of his experiences working in the Nauru Regional Processing Centre:

[www.markjisaacs.com/the-undesirables/](http://www.markjisaacs.com/the-undesirables/)

Watch *Chasing Asylum*, a documentary which exposes the real costs of Australia’s offshore detention policies; [www.chasingasylum.com.au/](http://www.chasingasylum.com.au/)

Connect with “Love Makes A Way”, a movement of Christians seeking to end Australia’s inhumane asylum seeker policies through prayer and nonviolent love in action:

[www.lovemakesaway.org.au/](http://www.lovemakesaway.org.au/)

## ... and the Cry of the Earth



### Signs of Hope

#### Presentation Sisters Share Queensland Community Alliance Celebration

The Queensland Community Alliance includes churches, mosques and other faith groups coming together with charities, community organisations, unions and ethnic associations to work together for the common good. Presentation Congregation Queensland is one of their many partners.



Donatien Kuyaga

Prior to the March Council elections, the Alliance had done some significant work in Logan (south of Brisbane), listening to the stories of local people who had experienced considerable difficulty accessing public transport. The new mayor was committed to financing public transport, but this decision needed Council approval.

One of those stories was from Donatien Kuyaga who said he had experienced first-hand the problems Logan faced with public transport.

“One night I caught the bus from the city to Springwood and waited for a bus to take me to the Hyperdome. I didn’t realise the service had already stopped. My phone was dead and I had no cash on me.”

His walk home took one hour.

Teresina and I joined about 50 Alliance members at the Logan Council meeting to show our support for the mayor. Before the meeting, we were briefed by the group organisers, including Fr Geoff Hoyte (Woodridge Anglican parish).

We were given precise instructions about when to clap, when to be silent and when to stand and cheer! When the Council passed the budget, we stood and cheered, throwing our streamers, blowing whistles and waving banners! We were very impressed by the time and energy that the Alliance members had obviously put into the preparation for this event.

Peta Anne Molloy pbvm, Queensland

Photos: Devett Kennedy

More information at [www.qldcommunityalliance.org/](http://www.qldcommunityalliance.org/) *The Logan Reporter* 29/6/16



Fr Geoff, Teresina and Peta Anne hold banners



#### Young Women Oppose Human Trafficking

A group of Year 11 and 12 students at Avila College, Mt Waverly, a Presentation Heritage School, gathered for a photograph with Joan Kennedy PBVM, after a presentation on Human Trafficking. They wanted to convey that they are passionate about creating a more just society in the Presentation spirit. They are young women with a heart for justice.

Joan Kennedy pbvm Victoria

#### Iona Past Pupil at the UN

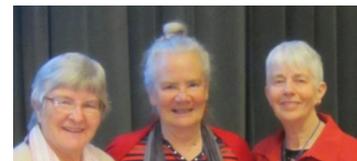
In April 2016, Olivia Dawson, past pupil of Iona College, Perth, began six months as a Short term Representative for the International Presentation Association at the United Nations. In August 2016 she addressed the Youth for Human Rights International Summit as the IPA representative.

You can read part of this presentation on p.4.



Find out more about Olivia under UN Connections at [www.internationalpresentationassociation.org/](http://www.internationalpresentationassociation.org/)

#### A Running Jump in Sydney



Joan Kennedy (Victoria), Sheila Quonoey (Wagga), and I were among the 200 people who participated in *A Running Jump*, an excellent justice Conference, organised by the Sisters of St Joseph to celebrate 150 years since their foundation.

Peta Anne Molloy pbvm Queensland

Read about *A Running Jump* at [http://www.sosj.org.au/news-events/view\\_article.cfm?id=3027&loadref=7](http://www.sosj.org.au/news-events/view_article.cfm?id=3027&loadref=7)



## Reconciliation - There are More Bridges to Cross



### The Invisible Children

Reports from Western Australia and Queensland reveal that, between 1996 and 2012, **17-20% of Aboriginal births weren't registered.** This means that more than 5,000 babies started life with no identity.

#### Why Registration is Necessary

Birth registration is necessary for many activities throughout a person's life – from starting school and opening a bank account to applying for a tax file number, or a driver's licence. Many take these things for granted, but the reality for some Aboriginal children is that essential services are not offered and basic rights not upheld because they are simply not counted. This presents these young people with serious impediments to pursuing a healthy and successful life. It has significant implications for mental health and future life plans.

#### Getting a Driving Licence

One major implication of not being registered is the inability to access a driver's licence. Unregistered driving often leads to fines, which can't be paid, which in turn leads to jail time. Research shows that Indigenous Australians are underrepresented in driver licence ownership and overrepresented in prison. In 2015, Aboriginal people made up about 2% of the Australian population but 26% of the prison population.

A recent study found that there is a strong link between driver licensing, education and employment.

Sandra Eades *The Conversation* 4/7/16

#### Systemic Abuse of Children in Detention

It is a truth, almost universally acknowledged, that any kind of punishment must fit the crime committed. Imprisoning "offenders" in sub-standard conditions, for longer than necessary, or for acts that do not require incarceration constitutes a violation of one of the most universally held moral norms: the prohibition against punishing the innocent. In Australia, the violation of this norm is common within our prisons and detention centres where the most significant breaches of human rights occur.

Last month, ABC Program *Four Corners* publicly uncovered mistreatment of Indigenous youths in the Don Dale Youth Detention Centre in Darwin. These incidents are not confined to the Don Dale Centre; mistreatment has also occurred in Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia.

These incidents point to two disturbing trends in the Australian justice system.

First is the significant overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the nation's jails (In 2015, the rate of Indigenous incarceration was 2253 per 100,000, compared to 143 per 100,000 of the rest of the population).

Second, is the normalisation of a culture of violent incarceration.

The system needs to undergo transformation. Alternatives to incarceration, led by and which involve communities, are needed to ensure that the welfare and rights of our young people are protected.

*Just in Time* August 2016

#### What You Can Do

Call for the Prime Minister to ensure the safety of all young people in detention centres in Australia:

[www.amnesty.org.au/action/action/42195/](http://www.amnesty.org.au/action/action/42195/)

#### Youth for Human Rights Summit

"As an activist I have taken to the streets to gather signatures to halt mandatory detention, and rallied to stop the forced closure of remote Indigenous communities.

I have volunteered as a camp leader working with under-privileged youth including Indigenous boys and girls, and have witnessed the outcry of my community over the recent revelations regarding maltreatment in the Don Dale Detention Centre.

While this must be addressed, an investigation of just this one centre will not tackle the underlying causes or prevent these kinds of situations from occurring again.

What is required is for State agencies and organizations to acknowledge Indigenous culture and traditions, recognize historical social, economic inequalities, and include the concerns and voices of Indigenous youth when developing programs.

We recommend the following:

- Training of community based social workers and caseworkers with insight and understanding to work with Indigenous people in the justice system.
- Develop youth programs with their participation.
- The building of community-centered rehabilitation programs.
- Develop alternatives to prison, e.g. outback training camps, to build cultural appreciation and self-confidence."

*Olivia Dawson IPA Volunteer, August 2016*

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