



Justice Jottings

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Springtime – that season when hope raises her head and turns our eyes towards the great blossoming; -the sunrise of new birth; the time of newly planted seeds.

The gentle approach of longer warmer days reminds us of the call to hope in the face of apparently insurmountable barriers of political leaders' reluctance to reduce carbon emissions and of inequality of service and opportunity for Indigenous peoples in remote communities.

In this edition of Justice Jottings we meet the wisdom and courage of men and women whose hope leads them to speak and act for what they believe.

Peta Anne Molloy, Anne Shay

IPA News



From North America

At the Conference meeting of North American Justice Contacts in Dubuque the Sisters decided to join the Society in working on the "INITIAL TASK" as described in our "IPA Action for Justice in Australia."

In August the Australian Justice Contacts were joined by Betty Singamai (PNG) and Ruth Coleman (NZ) for our Oceania Justice Meeting.

We reflected on the IPA Foci and what action we had taken so far. In each Congregation there have been meetings of Sisters and, where possible, of Associates. We have shared information and asked people to write letters to politicians and newspapers encouraging the Governments to reduce carbon emissions.

First Friday Fast

Touched by our experience of India, the Sisters from Oceania (Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea) decided that a Fast Day would be held each First Friday and the money saved sent to the Congregation Leader.

We remember that this practice is primarily a way of identifying with the poor and hungry; it is a challenge to personal and community greed.

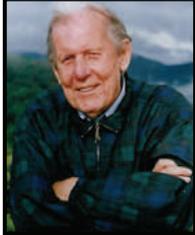


At a meeting of sisters and associates in Lismore, Anne Henson suggested that the Society Justice group design a postcard which could be sent to politicians, advocating for the **reduction of carbon emissions and the development of renewable energy**. The Justice Contacts' suggestions were sent to Cathy O'Keeffe who has produced a great card.

The Cry of the Poor ...

The Voices of Prophets

Thomas Berry, priest, visionary, cosmologist and 'geologian' died peacefully on 1 June 2009 aged 94.



Thomas Berry CP
1914 -2009

I remember the first time I met Thomas Berry. It was in January 1979 in Chicago at Mundelein College. Brian Swimme had moved out that fall to teach with us and he insisted that we invite Thomas Berry from New York to speak to the students. After his challenging presentation, we were walking to dinner through the wet slush of a Chicago January and I told Tom that I was working on a book on Hildegard of Bingen's paintings and illuminations. "Ah, Hildegard!" he said. "A great genius." And he was off expounding on Hildegard. He was the first person I had met who knew who she was. And of course his knowledge was of the deepest kind.

Thomas Berry studied contemporary science with depth and abandon, mind and heart. He also immersed himself in the ancient wisdom of indigenous

peoples and the wisdom of China and the East. Yet he always stayed true to the path of critical thought and of prophetic consciousness. He spoke with the poetry of his Celtic ancestors, and his scholarship was both critical and caring.

Above all, his love of the cosmos and his insistence that all education and all professions are ultimately responsible to the cosmos is his deepest legacy. By calling us to an enduring creation story from the new science he gave us tools for beginning over. He had a sense of wonder that did not diminished with age. There was a youthfulness in Thomas Berry that was evident in the radical questions he asked as well as in the wonder he elicited. He helped us dream the Earth anew, dream our work anew, dream religion and education anew.

cf Matthew Fox

As Pope Benedict rightly points out, in his latest encyclical:

Our failure to respect our environmental limits impacts on us all, but most of all on the poor. To ignore those limits is to fall prey to the temptation of the serpent in the garden, 'you shall be like gods'. But we are not gods but 'earth-beings', the play of words evoked by the name Adam. It is the archetypal temptation, to which one would think Christians would be most attuned.

(Neil Ormerod *Eureka Street* 4/09/09.)

In June 2008, 22 protesters stopped a coal train carrying 42,000 tonnes of coal to the Drax power station in North Yorkshire and shovelled the coal on to the embankment.

Their trial this year ended with a summing up statement from defendant Jonathan Stevenson.

We all know that times change, and what was acceptable in one era may not be acceptable in another. You have heard of how it was once legal to own other people, how it was illegal for women to vote. Well one way or another we are going to have to stop burning coal and move on from the fossil fuel era. And that means that the law will eventually have to change and acknowledge the harm that carbon emissions do to all of us, by making them illegal. The only question is whether the law will catch up in time for there to be anything left to protect."

Guardian 2 July 2009



... and the Cry of the Earth

The Climate Nightmare is upon us...



Gandhi once said, “The difference between what we do and what we are capable of doing would suffice to solve most of the world’s problems.”

We have reached a point in human history where “what we do” on this planet imperils our survival. Now is the moment to re-imagine and reconsider “what we are capable of doing”.

As Kofi Annan said recently, “The world is at a crossroads. [The Copenhagen] negotiators [must] come to the most ambitious agreement ever negotiated or continue to accept mass starvation, mass sickness and mass migration on an ever growing scale. Weak leadership,” he said, “is failing humanity.”

So what is stopping us from achieving what we are

capable of, of reaching ‘the most ambitious agreement ever negotiated’?.....

This is a cultural problem. It is not a lack of climate science that holds back action. It is how we respond to the challenge that the science poses, and that is deeply cultural. It is the values that we bring to bear, what we think is good for us, our religious underpinnings, our view of power and opportunity, of what is possible in the world and Australia’s place in it. All these value judgements stop us from embracing change.....

In Australia, the dominant economic, social and therefore Labour and Coalition view, is that resource extraction underpins wealth, power and influence—always has and always will. Regardless of the physical capacity of

the Earth to sustain it, regardless of the collapse of the Murray Darling or the climate impact of burning more coal or logging more forests, nothing will stand in the way of that extraction continuing. All policies to address climate change are seen through that cultural lens.....

Committing to delivering a safe climate means embracing the massive challenge of moving to zero emissions fast, frees you up to unleash human creativity in a wave unlike anything we’ve seen. Just as in 1989 we could not imagine the world of the iPhone and Blackberry, in the next 20 years we can and will create something that now seems impossible.

We are standing at an extraordinary moment in history. We must choose the dream or face the nightmare? Hope and fear are powerful emotions, one shrinks the space for action the other amplifies it.

Excerpts from speech Senator Christine Milne delivered to the National Press Club 17 June 2009.

Crikey 18 June 09



Greens Senator Christine Milne is a past pupil of the Presentation Sisters Tasmania.



Do you need Bottled Water?

Bottled water costs more than \$1.50 per bottle: that is more than 1,900 times the price of tap water. This is bad news for your budget, your health and the environment.

In 2004 26,000,000,000 litres of bottled water required 28,000,000,000 plastic bottles, of which 86% ended up as rubbish. This created 2,500,000 tons of CO2 and took 17,000,000 barrels of oil to make the plastic. It cost \$100,000,000,000. For a fraction of this money every person on earth could have clean tap water and safe sanitation and there would be less risk of developing cancer from the Bisphenol A leaching from the plastic.

Check websites: www.earth-policy.org www.oneworld.net

Is this Fair?

Australia’s development aid to PNG is around \$300 million per annum. This is substantially less than the subsidies given to extractive industries and other big carbon polluter sectors in Australia. The subsidy given to mining operations for diesel fuel alone in Australia is around \$300 million per annum.

Let your Federal Member know what you think

Reconciliation - There are More Bridges to Cross

Northern Territory Intervention

June 2009 marked two years since the Howard government announced its intervention into NT Indigenous communities. The intervention promised health, housing and education but the delivery seems to have fallen far short of these promises.

The following questions were asked in a letter sent to Jenny Macklin by Society members:

Racial Discrimination Act: The suspension of the Racial Discrimination Act is a gross violation of the human rights of Indigenous Australians. The Act was revoked by the Liberal government, without consultation and without Labor support, at the time. When will the Labor government restore it?

Housing: We are very pleased to see \$5.5 billion allocated to providing housing for Indigenous people over ten years, as a positive Labor initiative. Reports to date suggest little or no housing has been built for the people in need. Reports also suggest that government has failed to utilise the skills of locally based Aboriginal Housing organisations. Could you please tell us what partnership the government has entered into with Indigenous people to meet these needs?

Health: The Northern Territory intervention was introduced to “protect” children from abuse. We would

like to know what has been done to protect children from abuse and to improve their general health and wellbeing. Reports again suggest that programs that were effective have been closed down.

Income Management: The blanket income discrimination has resulted in great hardship for families with, and without children. How is the government addressing this discrimination?

Alice Springs Camps: Surely compulsorily acquiring the Alice Springs camps runs counter to the recognition of land rights, human rights and respect for Indigenous people. As Mitch, an Eastern Arrente woman says:

“Having white people tell you what to do once again is repeating history. By taking control of our own land the government is taking control of our heart and spirit.”

We would like to know what is happening about these acquisitions.

Comments from Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspective

Journalist Jeff McMullen has been involved with Indigenous people in many countries.

At a recent rally in Sydney he asked those present to recall the people who had lived on this land in 1778 and how they would be looking down on us.

He reflected that the rain which was pouring down could symbolize the tears of these ancient ones as they saw what was still happening to their people.

Bess Nungarrayi Price is the NT Indigenous Affairs Council Chairperson. In an interview with the human rights group *Rollback The Intervention* she said:

‘I know plenty of Aboriginal women who want the intervention because they can feed their kids now.

There needs to be open and honest debate among ourselves. These protesters have done their best to stop that from happening.

We have the strength if we can only be honest for once. The intervention started this debate. That is the best thing about it. It has made us think for the first time about what’s happened to us, where we are and where we want to go.

We need leaders who will convince our own mob to stop drinking, fighting and feuding, who will get our kids into school so we can produce our own professors of indigenous rights who can listen to our people’s stories.’



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Creator God, may the power of your grace transform us;

Christ, give us courage and hope to share our life with each other and the world.

Holy Spirit, empower us to work for justice for people and the earth.

God in your grace, transform the world. Amen