

Inside this issue:

Pope Francis - Prophet 1

Abandoning Migrants at Sea 2

Borders and Order 2

Take Action 2

Presentation responses to the Cry of the Poor 3

NAIDOC week 4

Reconciliation 4



We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land in 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.

A true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. (Laudato Si')

In these words Pope Francis captures some of the life-giving essence of his encyclical. This newsletter focuses on the prophetic nature of Laudato Si' and highlights a number of responses to the cry of the poor.

Anne Shay, Peta Anne Molloy

Pope Francis - a Prophet for our time and place

This blockbuster document is a breath of fresh air in an often stifling debate. I am preparing an executive summary of key points to send Australia's political and economic leaders.

This is a deeply human voice that doesn't address just the Church but absolutely everybody, because everybody has a responsibility.

The Pope says it's not just a matter of leaving it up to the decision makers as if it doesn't concern you and me. Everyone has to make some kind of response to what the Pope clearly sees as a crisis. This is not just a narrowly ecological crisis, this document presents a seriously big and deep picture. When the Pope talks about ecology, it's not just about the natural environment but the human environment; for instance the cry of the earth and cry of poor are the same cry.

The degradation of natural environment has its roots reaching into the human environment. Deserts of the heart will create deserts of the planet.

**Archbishop Mark Coleridge
Archbishop of Brisbane**

I am pleased to see the encyclical critiqued our weak response to ecological and social issues.

Pope Francis calls on people to seek new ways to understand the economy; he, condemns our throwaway culture and dependence on technology, and is calling on people to reassess the dignity of humanity and the integrity of creation in finding solutions to the ecological crisis.

**Archbishop Hart
President Australian Catholic
Bishops Conference**

Laudato Si' has the potential to have a similar impact to Pope Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical Rerum Novarum on the emerging union movement.

Pope Leo's encyclical encouraged and validated Catholic involvement in the union movement and gave it a moral legitimation. I think this encyclical will do the same for Catholic involvement in environmental movements.

Pope Francis' comments on a lack of political will on these issues rang true, particularly in our Australian context.

Professor Neil Ormerod

cf P. Dobbyn *The Catholic Leader* 24/6/15

Pope Francis has done a wonderful job in saying the whole social fabric of the way we are with each other as humans is reflected in what the environment looks like right now . Pope Francis addresses the encyclical to 'every human heart on the planet'.

The Holy Father says we need to live more simply; he makes a point of saying the way we treat each other is the way we treat the planet.

He has a big, concern about our throwaway culture; this goes from throwing away human life at all stages from the womb to the tomb, all the way to all the goods we throw away and pile up in landfills on the planet.

Sr Carol Zinn ssj

Laudato Si' offers us in Australia a powerful moral and spiritual imperative for environmental and social action. This encyclical calls on us all to embrace a new lifestyle that respects all of creation, and asks our leaders to commit to effective global agreements.

The Pope refers to a broad range of topics including pollution and its effect on the poor, urban chaos, drug trafficking, refugees and human trafficking.

**Jacqui Remond
Director Catholic Earthcare Australia**



Exploitation of the Earth ...

Abandoning migrants at sea is an attack on life

I continue to follow with great concern and suffering in my heart the stories of numerous refugees in the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea. . . I express my appreciation for the efforts made by those countries who have expressed their willingness to welcome these persons who are confronting grave sufferings and dangers. *Pope Francis*

This humanitarian crisis in our own backyard demands more action by Australia. We must join in helping those fleeing persecution who are now at the mercy of brutal people smugglers.

P. Ronalds

I invite you all to ask forgiveness for the persons and the institutions who close the door to these people who are seeking a family, who are seeking to be protected.

Pope Francis

What Must Be Done

No single country can tackle this crisis on its own, but neither can any single country afford to abstain from contributing.

The only way to help children seeking asylum is to guarantee they have safe passage from harm.

Those seeking asylum must have their claims processed quickly and effectively. They need shelter and basic services while waiting to hear whether they've been assessed as refugees. Parents need legal status to enable them to work and provide for their families, and children need protection, especially when they've been separated from their families.

They also need a place to go once they've been identified as refugees, where they can live a life free from constant fear of persecution.

What Australia Can Do

Investment in organisations such as the United Nations Refugee Agency to help them process refugee claims by asylum seekers would be a good start. So, too, would supporting education, health and protection services for vulnerable children in transit countries such as Indonesia. And increasing Australia's intake of refugees would go a long way towards better sharing responsibility across the region.

What Others are Doing

Indonesia and Malaysia agreed to provide assistance and temporary shelter to 7000 migrants, and the US and the Philippines stated they are willing to take some in.

The Thai government is cracking down on people smugglers, but is providing shelter to those who need it. The Indonesian government is providing immediate assistance and shelter to thousands who have arrived by boat in the past month.

cf P.Ronalds *The Age* 16/6/15

Draconian Legislation

'**The Australian Border Force Act 2015**' means that those working in Australia's detention centres are now forbidden under threat of jail from revealing information to anyone about anything they come across while doing their jobs.

This legislation will have far-reaching and disturbing consequences. From July, **doctors will no longer be able to fulfil their ethical and professional obligations to report mistreatment of detainees, including abuse of children.**

cf G. Barns, G. Newhouse *The Drum*
cf L. Newman *The Conversation*



Currently before Parliament, the '**Good order in detention Act**' will give detention centre officers unchecked power to use force against asylum seekers in any circumstance they think reasonable. This may include breaking up a peaceful protest. This legislation gives them the green light to use force without fear of repercussions.

The Government should address the real causes of tension in detention centres:

- the poor living conditions,
- the lack of information about people's cases and
- the arbitrary, lengthy nature of detention. People are currently being held for a record 442 days on average

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre

SUGGESTED ACTION

Before the Labor Party Conference at the end of July:
Write to Bill Shorten, asking him to adopt a **Human Rights based approach** to Labor's policy on asylum seekers, as suggested by the 2015 ACTU Congress.

... and of Peoples

Presentation Responses to the Cry of the Poor

Sister Lucy leads the charge against Human Trafficking

Co-ordinator of (ACRATH) in WA, Lucy van Kessel pbvm knows too well the repercussions of human trafficking on people.

Since 2009, when, with two other sisters, she set up ACRATH in WA, Lucy has been active in the struggle against this “shameful wound that is unworthy of civil society”..

One of the greatest issues Lucy has identified convincing government authorities to recognise trafficking for what it is, and not simply dismiss it as illegal migrants being coerced into forced labour.



Sr Lucy sent this message to all those committed to making a difference to human trafficking:

“Every one of us can make a difference, and the important thing is not to feel overwhelmed by what we see in the media, but to say ‘I CAN make a difference’. I want to die knowing that I’ve done as much as I can to make the world a better place.”

More information about ACRATH can be found at: <http://acrath.org.au/>
cf M.Ceccarelli The Record 29/5/15

Ballina celebrates World Refugee Day



The Ballina Region for Refugees, among whom are several members of the Presentation People's Justice group, collaborated with The Romero Centre to host an Art Exhibition featuring 6 Tamil artists supported at the Romero Centre.

The Major of the Ballina Shire, Cr David Wright signed a declaration for the Shire to become a Refugee Welcome Zone. This was followed by conversations with people from refugee and asylum seeking backgrounds. Jane Healy, an advocate for refugees, spoke of her work assisting asylum seekers fill in their application forms. These forms are 40 pages long and difficult for non-English speakers to comprehend. Petitions were signed to both houses of Parliament re the cruelty of current policies. *Anne Shay pbvm Lismore*

World Refugee Day at Wellsprings



‘Wellsprings for Women’, a Victorian Presentation Project, hosted a lively and colourful celebration of World Refugee Day on 17th June. The guest speaker, Sri, is the leader of ‘Friends of Refugees’ based in Dandenong.. This group of volunteers provide a wide

range of services across the Melbourne area, including emergency relief, education support, family literacy classes and garden skills. They offer friendship to asylum seekers. Sri herself, a young mother and a recent migrant, has given up her well paid employment, to support asylum seekers. Many of the volunteers are asylum seekers. Although some of the services offered by ‘Friends of Refugees’ are similar to what is offered at Wellsprings, this newer group can provide additional support to those who participate in ‘Wellsprings of Women’ programs.

Joan Kennedy pbvm Victoria

Lantern Walk for Refugees

Three Queensland Presentation Sisters gathered with thousands of others at South Bank in Brisbane on 5th June for the Luminous Lantern Parade. This event, organised by the Multicultural Development Association, celebrates the arrival of refugees and other newcomers to Queensland. Vibrant dancers in colourful costumes, drummers and singers entertained the crowd while

the groups walking in the parade gathered behind their banners. Hundreds of spectators applauded the spectators.

Many placards supporting refugees were held up by the walkers and by the people in the crowd. “It’s not where you’re from, it’s where you’re at” was one of the placards.

Annette Shears pbvm, Queensland



No Interest Loan Scheme

Sisters from the Wagga Wagga Congregation began a ministry, the Macarthur No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS), in 1998. The Scheme operates in the suburbs near Campbelltown, south-west of Sydney. This region is known as the Macarthur Area.

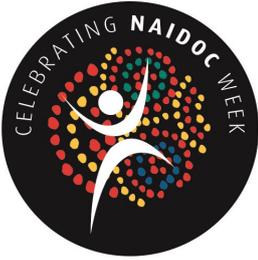
Recently NILS issued its 2000th loan and, since commencing, has lent almost \$1.6million to local residents who have purchased goods from local businesses.



Cecilia Wiltshire pbvm presents the Scheme’s 2000th loan to Margaret Russell of Campbelltown. *Cecelia Wiltshire pbvm Wagga Wagga*



***Indigenous communities are deeply rooted
in the cultural and spiritual links
Aboriginal people have to the land of their ancestors.***
Sydney Archdiocese website



2015 National NAIDOC Week theme

We all Stand on Sacred Ground: Learn, Respect and Celebrate.
This theme highlights Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' strong spiritual and cultural connection to land and sea.

The National NAIDOC Committee encourages all Australians, young and old, to embrace the 2015 National NAIDOC theme and to respect and celebrate local and national sites of significance or 'sacred places' and to learn of their traditional names, history and stories.
As the oldest continuing culture on the planet, the living culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples is intrinsically linked with these sacred places. Long before European arrival, these places had traditional names that reflect the timeless relationship between the people and the land.

Often they are connected with Dreaming stories or tell of the meaning of an area.
"Lots of places in your local region, your town or your city have traditional names and dreaming stories and we encourage everyone to learn more about their history, their meaning and the extraordinary relationship they have to the traditional custodians."
"2015 marks the 30th anniversary of the 'Handback' of Uluru to its traditional owners on 26 October 1985 and we wanted to honour and share their story with the nation."
NAIDOC website

Reconciliation—Follow King's example

Aboriginal Australians have a right to be recognised in the Constitution. This is what our people have been fighting for since the 1920's and 1930's.
Aboriginal leader and activist Joe Anderson, also known as the great King Burruga of the Dharawak tribe, advocated in the 1930's that Aboriginal people should have representation in the Federal Parliament.



King Burruga

There is plenty of fish in the river and plenty of land to grow all we want. One hundred and fifty years ago the Aboriginal owned Australia, and today he demands more than the white man's charity. He wants the right to live!"

Today we still remember his proud words: **"Before the white man set foot in Australia, my ancestors had kings in their own right, and I, Aboriginal King Burruga, am a direct descendant of the royal line."**
In 1933 he argued for change and tried to take his message to King George V in England:
"I am calling a corroboree of all the natives in NSW to send a petition to the King, in an attempt to improve our conditions. All the black man wants is representation in Parliament."

Aboriginal Australians today still fight for our right to live. We still want more than the white man's charity. We want authority and leadership in our lives and in the political processes that affect our lives. We still want representation in Federal Parliament and empowerment in our affairs.

Achieving true constitutional reform is going to require collaboration and cooperation within Indigenous Australia. King Burruga encouraged cooperation and solidarity as we work together for change.

"The black man sticks to his brothers and always keeps their rules, which were laid down before the white man set foot upon these shore. One of the greatest laws among the Aboriginals was to love one another, and he always kept this law."

It takes **courage** to advocate for serious constitutional reform. It is easy to **tear down** those who seek to propose new ideas.

**But if we support each other and work together,
we are stronger than if we try to do it alone.**

C. Ingrey The Koori Mail 4/5/15



**Australian Society of
Presentation Sisters**

4F/9 Redmyre Road
Strathfield NSW 2135

Phone: (02) 9737 5600
Fax: (02) 9739 5656
Email: society@pbvm.org.au
Web: [at http://presentationssociety.org.au/](http://presentationssociety.org.au/)