



Inside this issue:

Paris Conference: Pope Francis Urges World Action 1
Environment Martyr 1

Responses to High Court Ruling re Offshore Detention 2-3
Human Rights Violations in West Papua 3

Artefacts Come back Home 4
Empowered Communities 4
The Australian Dream 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.

“The time is always right to do what is right.” *Martin Luther King*

This edition calls us to reflect on the words of Martin Luther King to do what is right for our fragile Earth and its vulnerable peoples.

Peta Anne Molloy, Anne Shay

Paris Conference - Pope Francis Urges World Action

Pope Francis commended world leaders for reaching an agreement in the recently concluded Paris climate talks, urging the international community to promptly put it into action.

Implementing the plan will require a concerted and generous commitment on the part of each one. I hope that the agreement will give special attention to the most vulnerable.

“The conference on climate concluded in Paris with the adoption of an agreement, defined by many as historic.

I exhort the entire international community to promptly continue the path taken, as a sign of solidarity which becomes ever more active.”

cf Elise Harris CNA 13/12/15

Environment Martyr

We mourn the recent tragic assassination of Berta Caceres, a prominent Honduran indigenous rights activist. Berta stood up to corporations and helped delay the construction of the Agua Zarca dam which, if built, would destroy her community's land and the Gualcarque River in Honduras. The dam was delayed due to protests for so long that investors started pulling from the project.



Berta Caceres
Photo: RightsAndResources.org

In 2015 Berta won the Goldman Environmental award for her successful campaign against the Agua Zarca dam. As a result, Berta became a target for corporate spying, intimidation, and ultimately murder, simply because money wasn't being made. **She has now paid, with her life.**

This is why we are calling on the largest remaining investor of the dam, FMO (a Dutch Development bank) to join the Chinese investors Sinohydro and the International Finance Corporation in withdrawing financial support for this project immediately. You can sign the petition at:

<http://sumofus.org/campaigns/> Scroll down to Berta Caceres.

Source: www.sumofus.org

And from Meister Eichart:
... see God in all things, for God is in all things. Every single creature is full of God and is a book about God. Every creature is a word of God!
...He created all things in such a way that they are not outside himself, an ignorant people falsely imagine. Everything that God creates or does he does or creates in himself, sees or knows in himself, loves in himself. Outside himself he does nothing, knows or loves nothing; and this particular to God himself.

Earth Hour



Saturday 19 March
8.30 - 9.30 pm

Switch off the lights and the power! Take time to :

Be amazed!

Be filled with reverence!

Contemplate!

Be entranced by the wonder of the Universe!

Mary Southard CSJ

The Cry of the Poor

The High Court Ruled that Offshore Detention is Lawful

The Australian Government plans to return 267 vulnerable people to Nauru. This number includes 91 children and 37 babies born in Australia, who with their families now face an indefinite stay in an unsafe environment.

A State Government Response

A Hundred Stranded Children



Over the weekend, I met two of these kids and their ill father. I took them to the zoo. As we were walking around, I didn't see in their father's face, the face of a man who was trying to manipulate a system or undermine a policy. I saw the face of a man who just wanted his boys to be safe.

He'd escaped one of the most violent places in the world. Now here he was at the Melbourne Zoo with his boys. I wish you could have seen how much they smiled.

Under our proposal, the Victorian Government would support these children and their families and help them start a new life.

We're probably looking at about \$10,000 per person when you factor in health, education, housing, counselling and

support. We're ready to work with refugee and settlement agencies to get the best outcome for these families and the best deal for Victorians.

These stranded children are human beings who lost the lottery of birth but still deserve the gift of life. They just want to be normal little kids like yours and mine. It's not too late to save them. We need to do the right thing. We need to let them stay.

Daniel Andrews Premier of Victoria

Similar offers have also been made by the Premiers of Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia and Chief Minister of Australian Capital Territory.



Rallies

Joan Kennedy and a number of other sisters across Australia attended rallies against this decision within 24 hours of it being handed down. It was estimated that 10,000 people attended the Melbourne rally. This was extraordinary, given people had 24 hours notice.

Presentation Responses to This Decision

Letter to Iona College W.A Community

We are asking all students and community members to stand up for the rights of these people by writing a letter to their local Member of Parliament. You can find out who this is by entering your postcode in this search engine: www.apps.aec.gov.au/esearch

As Presentation People and a Christian Community we follow the examples of Jesus Christ and Nano Nagle and care for those who are most in need. During our 2016 Year of Community, we aim to promote a sense of belonging where each member of our community is valued.

**If I could be of service in serving souls
in any part of the world,
I would gladly do all in my power.”
Nano Nagle**

Support for Sanctuary

Presentation and Josephite Sisters were among the people around Australia who recently gathered to show they're ready to stand in the way of a government determined to deport people to harm. They are preparing for Christian Non-Violent Direct Action to protect people seeking sanctuary in churches, synagogues and mosques. They drew inspiration from the people of Brisbane who, for 10 days and nights stood outside the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital, putting themselves on the line to prevent the Australian Government from deporting a baby to Nauru detention camp.

William Penn (born 1644) said "A good end cannot sanctify evil means; nor must we ever do evil that good may come of it." It is a tragedy that our political leaders have convinced so many people that the end of stopping people coming by boat justifies or sanctifies the evil of punishing the innocent survivors of perilous boat trips. People are still setting out by boat, we no longer hear of the drownings.

Anne Shay The Catholic Leader 6/3/16

The Cry of the Poor

News from the Ballina Region for Refugees

Iraqi Khalid Alissawi was an interpreter for the coalition troops during the war. He came to Australia hoping to be free from the torment and torture (both physical and emotional) he has experienced throughout most of his life.

Instead, after two years of detention, where his propensity to speak up for himself and refuse to be treated as a prisoner was viewed and classified by Immigration as anti-social behaviour – he was languishing on Christmas Island with no viable exit date in the foreseeable future.

His mental health has been transformed from a boy full of hopeful dreams and boundless energy to a man embittered, crazed and medicated. The injustice of coming to Australia to seek refuge and peace – and the

abject cruelty, inhumanity and trickery that has been in life since his arrival, have without exaggeration, driven him mad. I believe we must all bear responsibility for allowing our governments to dress human rights abuses up as proper immigration practice.'

Jane Healey, Refugee advocate

Late last year, Khalid said that he would rather die than continue to live in detention. He signed a document to return to Iraq. Our group raised \$1,000 to fund his passport and visa. This enabled him to settle safely in a third country.

ABC journalist Steve Cannane recently came to Ballina to interview us about our involvement with Khalid for a follow-up Lateline program later in the year.

Anne Shay pbvm Lismore

On Good Friday, many will be singing the Negro Spiritual 'Were you there when they crucified my Lord?'

We could also sing:

'Were you there when their hopes were crucified?
Were you there when their boats were turned away?
Were you there when our nation turned its face?'

In 2013, Julia Gillard struck a deal with New Zealand Prime Minister John Key to resettle 150 refugees a year from Nauru or Manus Island. It is unbelievable that our government would prefer to see our fellow human beings languish in unsafe and unsanitary conditions rather than give them a chance at life.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Visit your local Federal Member

'The time is always right to do what is right.'

New Catholic Report Tells Stories of Murder, Kidnapping and Torture in West Papua

Allegations of recent military and police intimidation, beatings and torture, kidnapping and murder in West Papua, have been documented in a new Church report. The report records religious, social and economic discrimination including how the redistribution of land for major development has benefited multinationals but has excluded Papuans from ownership and jobs.

The report reveals that a slow motion genocide is happening 250 km north of Australia. There are indications that "the Indonesians want to replace the Christian religion with Islam".

The report author Sister Susan Connelly rsj was accompanied to West Papua by Brisbane archdiocese's Catholic Justice and Peace Commission executive officer

Peter Arndt. During their fact-finding mission they interviewed more than 250 community leaders in Japapura, Merauke, Timika and Sorong.

Sr Connelly, a respected human rights advocate, likened her visit to West Papua to "stepping back twenty years when I first went to East Timor. The same oppressive security presence everywhere, the same suspicion, bewilderment, frustration and sadness. The same fear. The same seemingly groundless hope."

"A man took my hands in his and said, 'We are in danger'. That simple statement sums up for me the experience of the whole visit.

cf Mark Bowling *Catholic Leader* 9/3/16

**We are all visitors to this time, this place. We are just passing through.
Our purpose is to observe, to learn, to grow, to love... and then we return home.**



Quandamooka Elders Joan Hendriks (Presentation Associate) and Marg Kurecirk with returned artefacts

Ancient Indigenous artefacts have been returned to the Quandamooka people of Queensland's Moreton Bay region.

The grindstones and 300 smaller stone artefacts, handed over by the Coochiemudlo Island Heritage Society, are now on display in the Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation's (QYAC) heritage collection.

Artefacts Come Back Home

The handover comes as the State Government reveals an economic transition strategy for Minjerribah/North Stradbroke Island, where sand mining is being phased out and an ecocultural tourism focus is being developed for the island and its surrounds.

QYAC cultural heritage coordinator Michael Costolloe said: "Coochiemudlo is extremely rich in terms of archaeological value. There are numerous living scar trees, which have had bark removed for canoes and shields. There are also a number of stone fish traps, middens and sites where stones were worked."

QYAC is hoping to reshape the region as one of Australia's most sustainable island communities. Koori Mail 27/1/16

What Indigenous leaders say about "Closing The Gap"

Recently appointed Senator Patrick Dodson says it is probably time to scrap the Closing the Gap policy; it will not work unless Indigenous groups have more involvement. "There's a lot of aspiration and maybe good intention, but unless you get participation from Indigenous entities at a local level and community level, it's not going to work."



Denise Bowden (North-east Arnhem Land)

I am a born-and-bred Northern Territory Indigenous woman. I have a background working in Indigenous affairs in very remote Australia and currently work with the Yolngu of north-east Arnhem Land. I aspire to create a future where Indigenous Australians have the same level of wellbeing, life opportunities and choices as non-Indigenous Australians. I believe that Empowered Communities has the potential to create this change by focusing on education, economic development and increased wellbeing through a grassroots, upward, regionally specific approach. *The one-glove-fits-all policy approach is not practical when I compare north-east Arnhem Land to other regions.*

— Denise Bowden, CEO, Yothu Yindi Foundation

Denise is one of 21 Indigenous leaders who have come together from eight regions across urban, regional and remote Australia to drive change. Their report "Empowered Communities" states: There needs to be a fundamental shift away from the traditional social policy framework in which Indigenous affairs have been conducted. **We need a long-term reform that requires a new partnership of Indigenous leaders, governments and corporate leaders in order to succeed, with all partners prepared to play their roles in a different way.** We seek formal

agreement to a 10-year Indigenous empowerment policy framework. There are two parts to our development goal. **First**, our goal is to close the gap on the social and economic disadvantage of the Indigenous Australians of the Empowered Communities regions. **Second**, we aim to enable the cultural recognition and determination of Indigenous Australians of the Empowered Communities regions so that we can preserve, maintain, renew and adapt our cultural and linguistic heritage and transmit our heritage to future generations. More information: www.empoweredcommunities.org.au

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Racism and The Australian Dream

Stan Grant

It is self evident that racism is killing the Australian dream. But we are better than that. The people who marched across the bridge for reconciliation, they are better than that. The people who supported Kevin Rudd when he said sorry to the Stolen Generations, they are better than that. My children and their non-Indigenous friends are better than that. My wife who is not Indigenous is better than that. And one day, I want to stand here and be able to say as proudly and sing as loudly as anyone else in this room, Australians *all*, let us rejoice. Read the whole speech at www.ethics.org.au Type 'Stan Grant' in Search space.