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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.

Desmond Tutu reminds us:

“If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor.”

Today the cry of Earth and the cry of those seeking asylum and of our Indigenous sisters and brothers call us to take urgent action. To remain silent is to choose the side of the oppressor.

Peta Anne Molloy, Anne Shay



International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) wins award



215 individuals and 103 organisations were nominated for the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize.

Norwegian Nobel committee president Berit Reiss-Andersen announces Nobel Peace Prize winner.

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) were happy to win this Prize as they wanted “their work to draw attention, to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapon”. The group was honoured for its ground-breaking efforts to achieve a treaty-based prohibition of such weapons”.

ICAN began as a small group in Melbourne in 2006 and was launched internationally in Vienna in 2007.

Its members describe themselves as a coalition of grassroots non-government groups in more than 100 nations promoting adherence to and implementation of the **United Nations nuclear weapon ban treaty**.

This global agreement was adopted by 122 countries - but not by Australia — in New York on 7 July this year.

At the time of publishing, the Federal Government had not commented on ICAN’s prize. Joan Kennedy pbvm Victoria

As you come to know the seriousness of our situation - the war, the racism, the poverty in the world - you come to realise it is not going to be changed just by words or demonstrations. It’s a question of risking your life. It’s a question of living your life in drastically different ways

Dorothy Day

Every stranger who knocks at our door is an opportunity for an encounter with Jesus Christ, who identifies with the welcomed and rejected strangers of every age... This solidarity must be concretely expressed at every stage of the migratory experience – from departure through journey to arrival and return.

Pope Francis

May our fears be changed into hope.
May our violence be changed into understanding and gentleness.
May our plundering of Earth be changed into reverence and respect.
May our greed be changed into sharing.
May our consumerism be changed into simple joys.

For nothing is impossible to God.
For nothing is impossible to us people in whom the Divine dwells and is at work loving us.
May all that is unloved in you and me at this spring time blossom into a future graced with love.

Adapted from: John Surette sj The Well 20/12/15

The Cry of the Poor ...

Voices for Asylum Seekers and Displaced

Refugees on Manus Island - Where do they go?



Refugees held by Australia on Manus Island have been offered the chance to move to Australia's other offshore detention island of Nauru. Hundreds of refugees refuse to leave Manus Island.

The Iranian refugee and journalist Behrouz Boochani said there was widespread mistrust of the government's offer:

"It's the latest political trick to get the refugees out of the Manus detention centre. The refugees have not left the detention centre despite the government's efforts to push them out in the past few months. They don't want to go to Nauru and they don't trust in this government.

It's completely unacceptable that after more than four years the Australian government still refuses to solve the problem by taking the refugees to a safe place, and instead is trying to send them to another hell. More than 700 men on Manus have been formally recognised as refugees and are legally owed protection. They should be allowed to start a new life in a safe place. They deserve to have this basic right."

Another refugee, Amir Taghinia, said: "After six deaths within the Manus detention regime, we refugees fear for our lives. We have repeatedly told the Australian government we would rather stay in the Manus prison without hope than face violence in Lorengau. Already too many lives have been lost."

"Dragging these men from one dangerous camp to another is not a solution," said Natasha Blucher, detention advocacy manager with the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre.

B. Doherty *The Guardian* 11/10/17

I couldn't walk away

When he read an article on same-sex marriage by *Guardian Australia* journalist David Marr, Victorian Liberal MP Russell Broadbent was inspired to speak out in Parliament against the government's offshore detention policy. He stated that he couldn't walk away from what David Marr had said, when he was talking about same-sex marriage:

"If only Christians fought like this for refugees. Imagine if the Coalition's big men of faith threatened to tear down their own government unless it brings home the wretches we've imprisoned in the Pacific. Surely there couldn't be a greater service for Christ?"

'I couldn't walk past it. Eventually you come to a place in your time here when, as a former member said in this House, 'There's a rubbish bin there and it smells and you can't walk past it.' Should I? No. I'm happy that the process with the Americans is being worked through very effectively at this time. And there will be a resolution. Once that time comes, it will be time for this nation, through its parliament, to act and resolve the situation on Manus and Nauru. Should I?' <http://www.russellbroadbent.com.au/category/speeches/>

stop Press

Voices of Prophets

Bring Them Here

Frank Brennan sj, Robert Manne, John Menadue, Tim Costello demand:
Bringing the Manus Detainees to Australia is the only option.

The Asylum Seeker Resource Centre is leading a large scale community movement to put political pressure on the Australian Government
We want everyone detained on Manus and Nauru to wait in Australia while resettlement in a third country is arranged.

What You Can Do

Join the thousands of Australians who have called and emailed their Federal Members of Parliament, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, Foreign Minister Julie Bishop, Leaders of the Opposition Bill Shorten MP and Tanya Plibersek MP

Malcolm Turnbull 02 6277 7700
Bill Shorten 02 6277 4022

Julie Bishop 02 6277 7500
Tanya Plibersek 02 6277 4404



Brigidine Sister Jane Keogh has spent several weeks on Manus Island. She writes:

You would not believe the horror of what is happening there to the health of the men. I spent \$1000 on medicines and vitamins - and pain killers for things like 6 months of chronic tooth ache. One man has had three operations for his kidneys; he now has a tube inside him that gives him pain every step he takes.

... and the Cry of the Earth

Signs of Hope

ARRCC (Australian Religious Response to Climate Change)



This group comprises people of many faiths, Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Muslim, who believe that it is our moral responsibility to care for the earth so that all creation may prosper. One of our recent actions has been to stand in opposition to the Adani mine in the Galilee Basin. Some weeks ago the group gathered at Minister Josh Frydenberg's office in Camberwell. It was intended that some of the group would stage a sit-in while others held a funeral for coal in the street. Several people came in from the street to support us.



Outside the Minister's office

Minister Frydenberg sent a message that he would meet the group one evening, so six of us – Anglican Bishop Philip Huggins, a Uniting Church minister, an ordained Buddhist, a Jewish rabbi, the ARRCC convenor and I tried to make our concerns heard.

Barbara Daniel pbvm Victoria

Indigenous rights and Adani's land deal

The Wangan and Jagalingou Traditional Owners Family Council are struggling to assert Indigenous rights in opposition to the proposed Adani Carmichael coal mine. Their struggle has largely focused on contesting Adani's efforts to secure the consent of the traditional owners for the mine to proceed. This consent would let Adani undertake all works associated with the project, and secure a 2,750 hectare area for critical infrastructure related to mine operations, including a workers village, an airstrip and a washing plant.

In April, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull reassured senior Adani executives in India that the native title situation would be fixed. However, the future of Adani's mine is far from secure. The Wangan and Jagalingou legal action challenging Adani's title process on several grounds is set for hearing in the Federal Court in March 2018.

"It is not my understanding that this bill will provide some kind of removal of a final legal hurdle for the Adani mine ... The traditional owners have made clear that there are some very serious allegations of fraud that have been made against Adani." Mark Dreyfus, Shadow Attorney-General

The Wangan and Jagalingou Traditional Owners Family Council are part of a growing international Indigenous rights movement that firmly centres Indigenous peoples' interests in struggles for restitution and a sustainable future for their people. They claim their right to free, prior and informed consent, reflected in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

The Family Council stress that they are custodians of country, and are acting in accordance with Aboriginal law in their resistance to the Carmichael mine.

Briggs et al The Conversation 19/6/10

An urgent call from the Pacific Conference of Churches



Former freshwater pond
Abaiang smh.com.au

The Pacific Conference of Churches supports action by churches in Queensland and other parts of Australia to pressure their State and National Governments to reduce global warming: 'We encourage you to take **necessary, timely and nonviolent** action to ensure that the Australian Government keeps its **commitments made in Paris at COP 21**. We specifically urge the Churches to **continue to campaign to stop Adani. If this mine goes ahead it will imperil all of us**. It is vital for us in the Pacific Ocean to keep the global temperature increase below 1.5 degrees.

We also call on our brothers and sisters in Australia to support Pacific communities who have called for a moratorium on seabed and terrestrial mining and research. Any further global warming imperils hundreds of Pacific communities who are already feeling the impact of sea level rise and salt water intrusion. We must stand together or sink individually.'



Marshall Islands huffingtonpost.ca

Response from the Queensland Churches Environmental Network

In the light of this call for action in solidarity with the peoples of the Pacific, we urge Christians in Queensland and the rest of Australia to join with people of faith and others in the community to take bold and committed action to ensure that Australia keeps its commitments made at COP21 in Paris in 2015.

*Old Churches Environmental Network
Climate Action Working Group*



Reconciliation - There are More Bridges to Cross



Acknowledgement of First Peoples

The CLRI NSW (Conference of Religious Institutes, NSW) Justice Committee recently discussed the issue of signage on historical statues and monuments, and the lack of acknowledgement of the First Peoples and local owners of land before European discovery and settlement of Australia. The committee decided on two actions:

1. To request that, on all historical statues and foundation stones marking exploration and settlement, wording be added on a plaque to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land. Many local governments have taken steps in naming areas and highways to acknowledge the local traditional owners of the land. **We encourage congregations and congregational schools** to petition local councils to take the step to add to the local statues and monuments for European Explorers and founding settlers an additional plaque with appropriate wording to acknowledge and name the **First Peoples and local owners of land**.
2. The Committee proposed that **Congregations be encouraged to consider adding** to original Foundation Stones at community houses and schools, a plaque with wording to acknowledge and name **the First Peoples and local owners** of the land on which we have built.

Now that the Prime Minister has placed all statues of Captain Cook on the National Heritage Register, it will be difficult to lobby for federal and state government action after the recent public debate, but we hope that by starting locally, and by example as Congregations, we can start to bring about change.

CLRI(NSW) 25/9/17

Breaking the Heart



In May 2017 the Uluru Statement emerged after a year-long national consultation process with Indigenous communities and a summit of 300 leaders at Uluru. A key proposal in this document was the establishment of constitutionally enshrined First Nations "Voice". The Federal Government announced its rejection of this proposal on 26 October, which was the 32nd anniversary of Uluru being handed over to its traditional owners. The decision has been met by anger among Indigenous people from across the country who endorsed the landmark Uluru Statement from the Heart.

Senator Patrick Dodson: The decision is disrespectful towards Indigenous people. There's nothing honourable about what's happened here," An advisory entity enshrined in the constitution is not necessarily a radical idea from an intellectual point of view. I hope the Uluru convention's other main proposal - for a treaties commission outside of the constitution - is not junked.

National Congress co-chair **Jackie Huggins** said: "People are disappointed that the Prime Minister and Cabinet have not heard the aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the country."

Victoria's Aboriginal Affairs Minister **Natalie Hutchins:** "The Federal Government has turned its back on Aboriginal people: To have gone to the lengths of setting up an advisory council and then totally rejecting what has come forward, it just makes you wonder where their commitment to Aboriginal Australians is."

Josie Crawshaw, a child protection advocate and a delegate at Uluru: "I am deeply disappointed. While our children are languishing in the jails and our communities are poverty-stricken, they've just wasted 10 years of a conversation, and tens of millions of dollars, to shelve this,"

Rod Little, co-chairman of the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples, said: "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been let down once again."

Sources: ABC News, The Saturday Paper, SMH

FIRE Carrier Project



The FIRE (Friends Igniting Reconciliation through Education) Carrier Project is a joint initiative of Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Victoria and the Opening the Doors Foundation.

The Project seeks to keep the Reconciliation flame alight in schools, educating the wider community about Reconciliation, our shared history and cultures. Several Presentation Colleges are involved in this project.

Recently at Presentation College Windsor, Sherry Balcombe (Co-ordinator of Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Melbourne) and Sr Joan Kennedy PBVM joined Josie Dilettoso, College Mission and Justice Leader and a number of student leaders. Sherry shared many stories illustrating the need for students to be involved in Reconciliation. The girls recorded the ways they were already involved in the work of Reconciliation and listed what more they could do.

Joan Kennedy pbvm Victoria

Photo: <http://firecarriersatsfoa.weebly.com/>

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