

peace through active non-violence

Is it not the time for all to work together for a new constitutional organisation of the human family, truly capable of ensuring peace and harmony between peoples, as well as their integral development.

John Paul 11 - World Day of Peace 2003

Convenor's Comments

Since the last edition, much has happened around the globe. The illegal war of the 'coalition of the willing' may be over, but the promised peace, freedom and democracy is a long way off. What is disconcerting is that many people have accepted this morally unjust war and its continuing aftermath of violence as inevitable, and by their silence, have condoned it. I arrived in the United States on the very day of the invasion and had to admit on the immigration form that I had been imprisoned. I had to prove that the charges against me nearly twenty years ago had been dismissed. Luckily I had with me a book of my experiences. I had visions of Guantanamo Bay looming. When I attended Mass in New Jersey the following Sunday, not one mention was made of the "war". The fact that the Pope and the US bishops had declared it as unjust and immoral was not even worth mentioning!

In the 'war on terrorism', Australia has enacted legislation whereby anyone over the age of 16 can be detained for up to seven days under suspicion that they may have information relating to a possible terrorist attack. Under dictatorships of the past this was known as National Security ideology. The signs are that we are heading down the slippery slope to a similar authoritarian rule, dictatorship or a new form of facism. Like the people of the third world, we now have a struggle

to defend the democracy and freedoms won by our parents and grandparents.

In our Centre, the work goes on. We recently held a multi-faith forum, *Wonder and the Will to Care*. The first of the combined Centre forums with the Christian-Muslim Centre and local Councils called *Christians and Muslims - Growing Peace* begins at North Sydney on July 17th. (See page two). *The Way of Peace* pamphlets had been a great success with about 45 000 being distributed each edition (even being sent to Sri Lanka). Check them out on our website.

At the Columban meeting of JPIC Co-ordinators in London in February, a commitment was made to campaign against the patenting of life forms, especially those concerning food and health. This is an issue in developing as well as developed countries. The challenge of the migration of peoples was also made a Columban commitment. The plight of refugees is a global concern. The response of richer countries to the cry of the poor and the desperate is not encouraging. Australia has responded to asylum seekers by locking them up in desert camps run by private companies for profit. We hold our heads in shame. Many good Aussies, though, are doing what they can to counteract this contemptible policy of our government. p

Brian Gore

The Centre responds from a Gospel perspective
to the regional and global challenges associated with peace, ecology and justice.

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FROM VIOLENCE TO WHOLENESS PROGRAM

“Woundedness lies at the roots of violence in ourselves, in others, and in our culture. Active nonviolence comes face to face with these wounds. This includes transforming our personal and social “scripts” that keep us in the rut of violence. But even more profoundly, active nonviolence makes contact with the sacredness that lies deeper than the wounds. This sacredness is the presence of God who longs for our wholeness. It is where our truest selves live, the depths where we receive the gift of our richness, our authenticity, and our capacity for compassion. It is the spiritual centre where we come to our senses, recover our balance, and reclaim our humanity.”

The PEJ Centre recommends this program developed by Pace e Bene Franciscan Nonviolence Centre www.pacebene.org. See details in Coming Events.

GROWING PEACE IN THE COMMUNITY

An initiative for peace is reaching out into local council areas to set up forums to demonstrate dialogue and understanding between Christians and Muslims. So far in the planning process, the members of this combined project of the two CMI Centres, Christian Muslim Relations and ourselves, have been impressed with the receptiveness of members of local Councils to the concept of Christians and Muslims coming together to talk. The first forum, *Growing Peace in North Sydney*, will be held on July 17th.

See details in the Coming Events.

‘DEPARTMENT OF PEACE PROPOSED’ IN THE US WHILE ‘PEACE-KEEPING INSTITUTE’ CLOSED.

A copy of the bill to create a cabinet-level Department of Peace in the United States, which was reintroduced in April, can be obtained at <http://www.dopcampaign.org>. The bill takes a proactive approach by seeking to address the causes of violence and provides (among other things) for the resolution of conflicts through nonviolent means. This is positive news.

MoveOn Bulletin, Friday, May 23, 2003 For further information, contact noah.winer@moveon.org

At the same time, however, the Pentagon has decided to close its only peacekeeping training institute at the US Army War College in Pennsylvania.

In Australia, there is a Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at Sydney University, and many other peace organisations, both church-based and secular. *Is it time to flag the idea of a government department of peace in Australia?*

A Tool for Non-Violence

Successful Relations Through Quietness

If you want to be successful in dealing with other people, says Julio F. Silverio in his *Book of Tips*, you must know how to be quiet. It is not difficult to develop this quality.

“All you have to do is just see yourself as being quiet. A little practice in being quiet will make you wonder that you can go so far with so little effort in so short a time.

As soon as you develop this quality, handling complaints, animosities, grievences and ill-feelings will become natural to you. You will practice the right method without being told what it is. It will become natural for you to let other people talk...Presently thye will talk themselves out.”

From Missyon March-April 2000

CHILDREN’S VOICES FOR RECONCILIATION

*“From little things, big things grow,”*sings Paul Kelly, and this is certainly true in the schools of the Diocese of Broken Bay. For example, last year, teacher Helen White from St Agatha’s Pennant Hills, involved students from her school in Aboriginal cultural awareness activities which culminated in an inaugural community Reconciliation Week event held in a local park. Things have grown so much that the school this year has:

- Held an Aboriginal Culture Day with activities led by Aboriginal people such as storytelling, dance and didgeridoo performance, learning about indigenous plants, planting a bushtucker garden; and designing a mural using the children’s own symbols.
- Had its School Choir and one class perform at Hornsby’s Reconciliation Week Celebration “Children’s Voices for Reconciliation”. This event, organised by Hornsby Council and Hornsby Area Residents for Reconciliation, now involves sixteen local schools.
- Held a Reconciliation Mass, featuring an Aboriginal speaker and a didgeridoo player.
- Been filmed and interviewed by “Totally Wild” at Channel Ten for a segment to be called “Kids for Reconciliation”.

This demonstrates what willingness and commitment can do to bring about the Reign of God. Our children and teachers are our hope for a more peaceful Australia!

MULTI-FAITH DIALOGUE ON ECOLOGY – “ WONDER AND THE WILL TO CARE!”

What might an Aboriginal meteorologist, a Buddhist peace-worker, a Catholic missionary, a Hindu Land and Environment Law Court Commissioner, an Islamic scientist and a Uniting Church Professor of French have in common?

At a forum held on June 21st at Australian Catholic University Strathfield, more than 130 people listened to and questioned speakers representing seven different religious traditions who spoke about some of the links between faith and ecology. Chaired by Dr Paul Collins, historian, media personality and writer, this gathering enabled people to open their hearts and minds to a variety of approaches to the spiritual connection to the natural world. For many Australians, the beauty and diversity of the natural environment stirs up a spiritual experience, and its abuse is a serious concern of social justice. Pope John Paul II has called Catholics to undergo "ecological conversion."

The aims of the day long Forum which was initiated by the Columban Centre for Peace Ecology and Justice in conjunction with the Sydney Archdiocesan Commission for Ecumenism and Inter-Faith Relations, Australian Catholic University, and Catholic EarthCare Australia were:

- to help people's ability "to wonder" at earth's complexities and their "will to care" about it;
- to highlight connections between ecology and religion as a contribution to the environmental movement;
- to build cooperation on environmental matters between faith groups and individuals; and
- to discuss forming a "Faith and Ecology Network"

Many of the participants are involved in practical environmental work, but were very excited at this initiative to bring together people of different faiths for a common purpose. The day culminated in the approval by participants of the formation of a Faith Ecology Network – FEN. For a full report on the day, copies of papers and contact details for speakers, see the Columban Peace Ecology and Justice Website.

RECYCLING CARTRIDGES

Australians throw away more than 18 million computer cartridges every year. See

www.planetark.org

for details of where to recycle your printer cartridges.

DOES CREATION NEED REDEMPTION?

At a recent presentation, attended by members of the PEJ Centre, Fr Denis Edwards (theologian) and Professor Stuart Hill (chair of social ecology at University of Western Sydney) shared their insights about creation theology and environmental ethics. Fr Edwards reminded listeners that the natural world in its competition for survival is often violent, then came up with this challenging thought: *If Christ's death and resurrection is a promise of redemption, does this mean for all of creation, not just the human species?* A copy of Fr Edwards' paper is available from Julie Morgan, Franciscan JPIC jpic@franciscans.org.au

SUSTAINABLE LIVING COMPETITION

This is open to all Australian high school students (Yrs 7-12.) Fax 02 9385 4507, ph 02 9385 4979 www.sustainableliving.com.au for details.

REFUGEES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Published annually since 1993, the Red Cross/Red Crescent World Disasters Report 2001, brings together the latest trends, facts and analysis of the world's ever-growing humanitarian crises. *"In many cases, nature's contribution to 'natural' disasters is simply to expose the effects of deeper, structural causes - from global warming and unplanned urbanisation to trade liberalisation and political marginalisation. The effects of human(sic) action are often evident - many natural catastrophes are un/natural in their origins."*

<http://www.ifrc.org/publicat/wdr2001/>
http://foe.org.au/nc/nc_enviro_pop.htm

Friends of the Earth

WATER A COMMON GOOD OF HUMANITY

In this International Year of Fresh Water, the Vatican has stated its strong support for water as a common good of humanity and the continued public, not private, overall control of water supplies. In a note submitted to the World Water Forum on March 22nd entitled "Water, An Essential Element for Life", Archbishop Renato Martino stated that recognising water as destined for the common good is "the basis for cooperation toward a water policy that gives priority to persons living in poverty and those living in areas endowed with fewer resources."

The Water Matters Campaign, which is coordinated by TEAR Australia, has produced and distributed many resources and helped focus lobbying efforts on the gravity of the water issue. See www.watarmattersaustralia.org for details.

TAMAR'S CRY

South Africa has the largest number of people currently living with HIV/AIDS. Denise Ackermann, a South African theologian, comments briefly on the HIV/AIDS pandemic in South Africa in this CIIR publication, and then writes on its gendered nature. She does this by focussing on the biblical story of Tamar and then reflects theologically in the search for 'clues of resistance and hope'. Her original audience was South African, but because her words have relevance globally, the London based Catholic Institute for International Relations has published *Tamar's Cry* for international readers. The PEJ Centre has a small number of copies available for purchase. **CIIR (Catholic Institute for International Relations)**, email: ciir@ciir.org website: www.ciir.org

WIDENING GAP BETWEEN RICH AND POOR

The Age of June 13th reported in a study from Sydney University by the Australian Centre for Industrial Research and Training that the gap between the rich and poor in Australia is continuing to widen. We have one of the world's most prosperous economies but most of our citizens are not sharing the wealth. There has been "an explosion" of earnings at the top and a "stagnation" of earnings at the bottom and the middle of the labour market.

www.cathnews.com/news/306/70.php

AUSTRALIA-US FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Australians need to be very concerned about the long-term effects on our society of the proposed Australia-US Free Trade Agreement. On May 30th, the Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network (AFTINET), launched a leaflet, **Trading Australia Away**, outlining the concerns. Contact <http://www.aftinet.org.au/> for a copy.

OVERSEAS AID BUDGET

The 2003-04 Overseas Aid budget basically maintains spending in real terms representing a modest increase of about \$31million for investment in peace and stability through poverty reduction programs. This is in contrast to the \$750 million cost to Australia of the war in Iraq.

ACFOA <http://www.acfoa.asn.au/index.htm>

GE PLANTS – HOT ISSUE GLOBALLY

Recently the NSW Government placed a three-year moratorium on the commercial release of Bt canola (canola seed with a built-in virus to kill certain bugs). While this step is welcomed there is a worry about unregulated experimental trials outdoors.

In the Philippines the proposed introduction of Bt corn (corn seed with a built-in virus to kill corn borer) is meeting grass-roots opposition, not only because of the effects on health and bio-diversity, but also because it will make farmers dependant on the will of agro-pharmaceutical companies.

The stand of the official Catholic Church in the Philippines is one of caution in the light of this new technology. However, the Archdiocese of Jaro on the island of Panay is working with the local government to prevent the spread of Bt corn. Other dioceses are expected to follow. In other areas such as in Mindanao, farmers have uprooted Bt corn as a sign of protest. Brian Gore is keeping a watchful eye on this situation.

TIMOR LESTE

Kath Boyle, Columban Mission Society Education Officer, arrived in East Timor just in time for the first birthday celebration of the world's newest nation and our close neighbour. As President Xanana Gusmao pointed out recently, half the population lacks any formal education, youth unemployment is high, and two out of every five people live on less than 55 cents per day. Kath is in Bacau and is involved in the process of designing a new Religious Education curriculum for Catholic teacher education.

THE G8 SUMMIT FAILS THE POOR AGAIN

The PEJ Centre supports statements made by other Church agencies at the time of the recent G8 Summit in Evian that the leaders of the wealthy countries have failed again to make any impact on reducing poverty, instead choosing to focus on so-called "terrorism". The G8 have said they are committed to the Millennium Development Goals, yet indebted countries are being denied the funding to implement them because a funding increase takes them over the threshold of debt-sustainability. Jubilee Australia says The Millennium Development Goals must be tied to debt relief. www.jubileeaustralia.org.au The focus of the G8 should be on the terrorism of poverty.

HOUSE OF WELCOME

"Open Boat, Barbed Wire Sky - Poems for Refugees" is a book of poems which can be purchased from Live Poets' Press, 1/17 Allister St. Cremorne 2090. Cost: \$21.50 (includes postage). All the profits go to support the House of Welcome, a project of the NSW Ecumenical Council which serves the needs of people released from detention who are on Temporary Protection Visas, and those who are released without any support from the government.

In 1985 the Australian Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace published *Work for a Just Peace*. Drawing on Scripture and Tradition, it remains a rich source about war and about peace building in the Australian context. Growing environmental awareness only strengthens the document.

THE ECONOMIC COST OF WAR SLOWS ENVIRONMENTAL INVESTMENT

"Opportunity Cost" is a key concept used by economists about the best use of capital. Money tied up in low yielding assets when better investments are offering is regarded as a loss, the cost of a wasted opportunity.

War is expensive and an opportunity cost. Armaments cost about US\$ 800 billion a year. If only a percentage of it was spent on environmental problems and the restructuring of world economies to make them ecologically sustainable, many of the causes of war could be reduced. Governments say they cannot afford research or finance environmental solutions. In reality, as global warming and other problems affect this and future generations, they cannot afford not to spend that money.

Economists have the option of "green development" even though turning around world economic priorities is a mammoth task. After WWII the US economy was increasingly militarised. Now, many cities have a large economic dependence on the arms industry producing everything from clothing to missiles. Trade and aid too are tied into the arms industry. Even employment is militarised. By desire or imposition, this economic pattern has been copied in developing countries. But on purely economic grounds, a better return can be made by investing in *environmentally sustainable development*. The earth can supply the resources for this type of development but several worlds of resources are not enough for *an economy of destruction*.

URANIUM PARTICLE POLLUTION

Work for a Just Peace addressed the threat of nuclear bombs. In reality, nuclear radiation is now being spread by a new type of shell. The conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan and Bosnia can rightly be called nuclear wars.

DU stands for Depleted Uranium. An estimated 300 tonnes of it were used in the recent Iraqi conflict as an effective tank destroyer and bunker buster. Nearly twice as heavy as lead, put into shells and bullets it has great penetrating power. Natural uranium is "enriched" to increase the percentage of U235 before it is used for power generation or nuclear weapons. The remnant U238 is the DU. Soldiers and citizens alike have been exposed to its microscopic uranium oxide particles from shells "aerosoled" on impact. The Royal Society states that it is believed by many scientists to cause cancers and other severe illnesses (The Guardian 17.04.03).

"Gulf War Syndrome" is the common name given a bundle of illnesses suffered by over 50,000 USA soldiers attributed to DU particles - damaged immune system, leukemia, birth defects, lung and other organ damage. Less well protected "enemy" soldiers and civilian populations have been affected at greater rates. The poisoning continues, mainly of children, who in their curiosity are picking up the remnant shards of DU impregnated shell casings. Mercy Sister Rosalie Bertell PhD details how DU aerosol enters directly into the blood stream. She concludes that this type of radiological and chemical warfare should be banned. www.iicph.org/DU_Human_Rights_Tribunal.htm

As the government considers the proposal of UK/USA company Pangea to construct an international waste dump for nuclear material in South Australia, we will be inviting to our shores more radioactive pollution. (Adelaide Catholic Earthcare Commission)

Not to be ignored are the organisms, plants and animals affected by DU. Even from a selfish motive, the human food chain is polluted. But DU pollution affects the integrity of these living things and gives another reason for "the Creator to be disappointed" with our human performance as Pope John Paul II wrote.

<http://www.envirosagainstwar.org>

<http://www.acfonline.org.au/asp/pages/document.asp?IdDoc=1247>

July

9th - **Helder Camara Lecture 2003 – Sydney**, “The Future of Christianity: Truth and Dialogue in a Post Modern Era”. Ph: Br Mark 0401 389 720

6th – 12th – **NAIDOC WEEK**

14th – 17th - **International Perspectives on Peace and Reconciliation Conference**, International Conflict Resolution Centre, Melbourne University. Speakers include Jose Ramos Horta, and Johann Galtung.

Contact Dr Di Bretherton , email: bret@unimelb.edu.au

14th – 18th - **Gathering “No More Radioactive Genocide”**. A chance for indigenous and non-indigenous groups to come together to stop the nuclear industry. Penrose Park, Silvertown (26km north of Broken Hill) <http://www.nukefreegathering.org>

15th - **International Humanitarian Law Department Information Day**, Australian Red Cross, Melbourne, 9.30am - 4.00pm - Contact

richardson@vic.redcross.org.au or Ph 03 8327 7840

15th - **Future Implications for World Democracy –** A Talk by George Monbiot author, Venue: The Valhalla - 166 Glebe Point Rd, Glebe; Ph 02 9660

2333 or email books@gleebbooks.com.au

15th – **Muslims & Christians... Where Do We All Stand?** Jesuit Seminar Series, **Brisbane**, Ph 02 9356 3888 or e-mail info@unyia.org.au

16th - **Muslims & Christians... Where Do We All Stand?** Jesuit Seminar Series, **Sydney**

17th - **Muslims & Christians... Where Do We All Stand?** Jesuit Seminar Series, **Canberra**

17th - **Growing Peace in North Sydney**, Christian-Muslim forum for community harmony in partnership with North Sydney Council, Ph 02 9488 8844

(Columban Centre for Peace Ecology and Justice)

26th – Commencement of **From Violence To Wholeness program** in the **Sydney area**. Contact: John Dacey 02 9642 0558 or animate@palms.org.au

27th - **National Tree Day**, www.planetark.org/trees/

28th – **Muslims & Christians... Where Do We All Stand?** Jesuit Seminar Series, **Melbourne**

29th - **Muslims & Christians... Where Do We All Stand?** Jesuit Seminar Series, **Adelaide**

30th - **Muslims & Christians... Where Do We All Stand?** Jesuit Seminar Series, **Western Sydney**

30th - **Global Education Conference: Australia's Place In The World: Global Issues, Local Challenges**, Melbourne

<http://www.worldvision.org.au/resources/conference>

25th - **Catalyst for Renewal Dinner “Human Rights in a Contemporary Australia**. ph 02 9816 4262.

August

1st - **Muslims & Christians... Where Do We All Stand?** Jesuit Seminar Series, **Perth**

9th – **International Day of Indigenous People**

14th – **Hiroshima Day**

13th – Conference - **Developing an Earth Sensitive Community within the Principles of Ecojustice Qld**, GAIA Education Services Ph 07 3880 3691, email PaulR@ges.net.au

15th-16th – **Islam and the West – The Impact of September 11**; Monash University, Melbourne; Keynote Speaker: Professor Hassan Hanafi, Cairo. Ph: Mrs. Elena Mogilevski; 03 990550 98

<http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/politics/conference/>

18th to 24th - **Landcare Week**

24th - **Refugee Sunday – Global Pathways .. To Protect or Reject**

26th – **Anniversary of the Tampa Rescue**

28th Aug – Sept 14th - **Gil Bailie (Violence Unveiled)** is coming to Australia. See local news for details of his Perth workshops. For details of his Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane workshops , contact John Dacey animate@palms.org.au

31st Aug – 6th Sept - **Keep Australia Beautiful Week**

September

1st - **Wattle Day**

7th – **National Threatened Species Day**

10th – **International Day of Peace**

11th – **New South Wales CLRI'S Social Justice Committee Seminar** 9.30am-1.00pm, Good Samaritan Centre, 2 Arcadia Road, Glebe

15th – 19th - **International Conference, Vienna, Austria, Gaining from Migration: A Global Perspective on Opportunities for Economic and Social Prosperity"**. <http://international.metropolis.net/events/vienna/worksop>.

16th – **International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer**

28th **Social Justice Sunday**

October

3rd – **Walk to Work Day**

5th – **Respect the Beach Day**

6th – **World Habitat Day**

13th - Commencement of **From Violence To Wholeness program** in the **Sydney area**. Contact: John Dacey 02 9642 0558 or animate@palms.org.au

19th – 25th – **National Water Week**

26th Oct – 1st Nov- **National Bird Week**

November

1st – 9th – **Frog Week**

2nd – **National Hold on to Your Butt Day**

9th – 14th – **ISWA World Congress 2003 – Sustainability in a New World – Melbourne Convention Centre – www.iswa2003.net**

10th – 16th - **National Recycling Week**

The aim of this newsletter is to show the interplay between peace, ecology and justice issues, hence its name *Connections*.

