



**Edmund Rice Centre**

Awareness. Advocacy. Action

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# **ERC JUSTICE UPDATES**

## **May 2019 No.9**

Dear All,

Welcome to the 9th Edition of ERC Justice Updates your regular newsletter from the Edmund Rice Centre, on all sorts of matters relating to social and environmental justice.

**REMEMBER WE ARE HERE TO HELP!**

**Dear ERC Supporter,**

It is with great sadness that the lead story in this newsletter is once again that of the absolutely abhorrent and senseless attacks of terrorism on those at Prayer . This time Christians on one of their holiest Days Easter Sunday in Sri Lanka. Other sites all over Sri Lanka including hotels in Colombo were also targeted. The Edmund Rice Centre offers sincere condolences to all Sri Lankan's especially in the country itself but also those family and friends in Australia and elsewhere in the world.

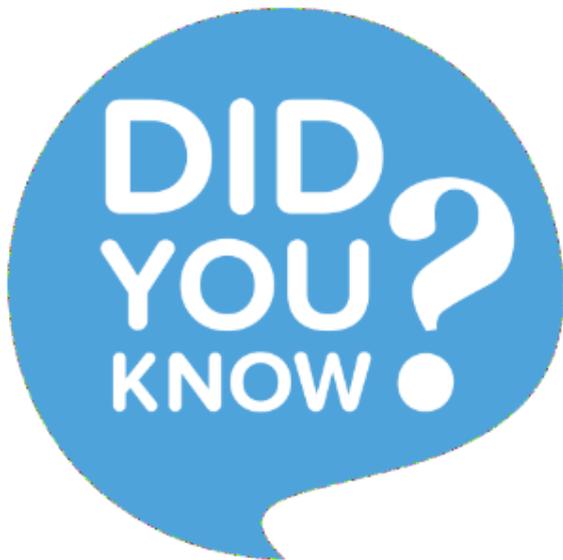
Thanks to those of you that provide feedback, it is really appreciated. Please do send us your feedback or any information you think would be good to include in further updates.

**Don't forget to forward Justice Updates onto anyone or let me know their email address and I will subscribe them.**

**Regards**

**Marita**

**Communications Project Officer,  
Marita McInerney**



- **On Friday May 17<sup>th</sup>, The Australian Government will have detained men & women on Nauru & Manus Island for 2023 days.**
- **ACOSS & UNSW REPORT 'Inequality in Australia 2018': Highest 20% of Australians live in a household with *five times* as much income as the lowest 20%.**
- **Extreme ends of this scale: Highest 1% of Australians live in households with an average weekly income that is **26 times** the income in the lowest 5%(\$11, 682 vs \$436/week). This means the highest 1% *earns fortnight as much in fortnight* as the lowest 5% *receives in a year*.**
- **Closing the Gap Strategy: 2019 Report reveals the Gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous life expectancy is currently 10.8years for men & 10.6 years for women is actually widening.**

- **Closing the Gap Strategy: Child mortality target has not been met - Indigenous rate of 164 deaths per 100,000 children aged between 0-4 years is still 2.4 times the non-Indigenous rate of 68 deaths per 100,000 in this age group.**
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- **David Coombs, The Conversation May 1st 2019 writes: 'The Closing the Gap Policy is widely described as a failure - 3 reasons for this are: 1. Laudable policy ambition was not matched with a radical change in how business is done in Indigenous affairs. 2. Governments' stated policy goals have not always matched their policy actions. 3. Measures intended to achieve the targets have rarely been subject to careful evaluation and revision.**



### **Edmund Rice Centre Staff Reflection 26th April 2019**

Among the carnage of the Sri Lankan Easter bombing attacks the community's solidarity is still visible

Though I am a Muslim, I must help them because we are all family here," said Roshan.

When Roshan Sainoon had finished carrying the bodies of the injured and the dead out of St Anthony's Shrine in Colombo, his hands were black with blood. Roshan, a Muslim man who lives close by, ran into the church with some friends moments after a deadly explosion ripped through the Easter Sunday service, killing many Christians inside.

"These people are my neighbours, my friends, my family," he said, recalling how their blood had covered his clothes and skin.

With its white, columned facade and its cross towering high over the busy intersection below, St Anthony's Shrine is an unmistakably Catholic church amid the crammed and colourful heart of Sri Lanka's largest city.

"We are all friendly."

Sri Lanka is a majority Buddhist nation, with Hindus comprising the largest minority faith with about 12 per cent, followed by Muslims and Christians with under 10 per cent each.

Hindus and Buddhists were known to pay their respects at the shrine to St Anthony, who is regarded as a protector of their neighbourhood.

### **Prayer for Sri Lanka after the bombings on Easter Sunday**

*God of peace, we come to You in our shock and sadness. We grieve this sudden loss of lives in senseless acts of violence. We seek protection, strength and comfort in this time. Make your presence be made known to all who grieve and your strength be with survivors, who will carry the memory of this moment in their minds. We remember all the people of Sri Lanka who carry within them the wounds of past conflict, as we pray for all who have experience horror and violence from acts of terror in our world.*

*Jesus, Prince of Peace, we remember your words to us that we pray for our enemies and all who would persecute us. We pray for the perpetrators of these acts of violence and brought fear and death to so many. Fill us with your Spirit of Peace so that our lives may not be dominated by anger and revenge but mirror your image in this world to be peacemakers and take the road of peaceful living wherever we are.*

*God of peace, show us through the example of Jesus, how to do justice, love mercy and kindness, and walk humbly in your presence. Rather than seek revenge may we seek your justice, your way of life that renews and restores relationships in our world. May we not live in fear but walk in hope together.*

***We make this prayer in Jesus' name.***

**Peace demands the most heroic labour and the most difficult sacrifice. It demands greater heroism than war. It demands greater fidelity to the truth and a much more perfect purity of conscience. *Thomas Merton***



**Lest We Forget: Australia's brutal treatment of Aboriginal people**

***Welcome to country April 24, 2019***

**Despite attempts by many Australians and even politicians to gloss over the brutal colonisation of Australia, there is no denying the crimes against humanity that continue to take place.**

**From the earliest years of invasion there are countless stories of massacres handed down from generation to generation and there are settlers records found in old journals and letters that give grave insights into those early years. Some of the worst crimes against humanity happened right here in Australia.**

**Complete communities wiped out by gunfire, herded off cliffs, burned alive and poisonings by the use of strychnine which is widely regarded as one of the most excruciating ways to die.**

**Sadly politicians do get away with their efforts to gloss over this early history. Australia's education system also does little when it comes to highlighting these atrocities as well. ANZAC Day still omits the documented Frontier Wars even though the War Memorial states the day is about remembering**

**all wars.**

**Something far less easier to hide and gloss over is the trove of images from around the turn of the century, a time when Australia was supposedly 'young and free'. But these images show that life for Aboriginal people was more about incarceration and slavery.**

**In recent years, Indigenous Facebook pages have been trying to share these images with the international community however our voices often fall upon deaf ears. Many of the following images contain images of**

**Aboriginal men and children in chains who were often chained up by the neck and sent to Aboriginal concentration camps.**

**The images highlight Australia's history of slavery. All of this history as well as present day issues are often suppressed in Australia and subsequently overseas as well. Now that the truth is being recognised internationally,**

**will there be any pressure for justice to be served for the theft of a continent and an ongoing attempt to wipe out our culture and rights? Will we see international sanctions imposed on Australia, similar to those imposed upon South Africa?**

**The argument that all this happened under Britain's rule is not true. All of these images are from after 1901 when Australia**

**became a nation. The neck chains were used well up until the 1960's and only used on our people.**

**Neck chains were used while Aboriginal men were marched from their homelands into prisons, concentration camps**

**known as missions and lock hospitals or forced into slavery. Women were also forced into slavery as domestic servants.....**

**Read more: <https://www.welcometocountry.org/australias-brutal-treatment-of-aboriginal-people/>**



What's next in 2019 for PCP?

This year, a very special opportunity arose to bring a total of four I-Kiribati and Tuvaluan young leaders to Australia for a three-day Climate Reality training program on 5-7 June. Climate Reality is a high-profile international climate advocacy training program led by Nobel Laureate and former US Vice President Al Gore (link underlined text to <https://www.climaterealityproject.org/training>).

PCP is pleased to announce that a total of six people have been accepted to attend this important program. Two young leaders each from Kiribati & Tuvalu and Maria Tiimon the PCP Pacific Outreach Officer and Corinne Fisher the PCP Coordinator.

In order to maximise the benefits of the Climate Reality training, we propose to follow it up with a week of additional training and actual climate change advocacy in Sydney. This would include a Train-the-Trainer component so that participants can go back home and engage others in their networks. Participants would also be required to undertake 10 'Acts of Leadership' (for example, a presentation to their community about the science of climate change). Of course, PCP would support them all the way.

PCP is excited about the prospect of hosting such a program but we need your financial help to make it happen.

If you are in a position to help us fund this work, please consider donating by clicking here (link underlined text to [www.erc.org.au/donate](http://www.erc.org.au/donate) ), then send us an email (link underlined text to [pacificcallingpartnership@gmail.com](mailto:pacificcallingpartnership@gmail.com) ) to let us know you would like your donation to be used for our 2019 Kiribati-Australia-Tuvalu Exchange Program.

**We thank you in advance for your generous support.**



***Nations stirring up nationalism betray their mission, Pope says  
Carol Glatz, Crux, 2nd May 2019***

ROME - Migrants are not a threat to a nation's culture, traditions and values, Pope Francis said.

Every nation is a product of immigration and the integration of diverse peoples, united by specific values, cultures and "healthy traditions," he said.

.....

The Catholic Church, the pope said, has always promoted love and respect for one's nation and cultures while also warning against turning such affection into the hatred and exclusion of others - a "confrontational nationalism that puts up walls, indeed, even racism and anti-Semitism." .....

The state is meant to be at the service of people, families, the common good and peace, he said. "However, too often states become subservient to the interests of a dominant group, mostly for economic profit, who oppress - among other things - ethnic, linguistic or religious minorities who are on their territory."

In fact, he said, one can gauge a nation's understanding of human dignity and humanity by the way it treats migrants, he said.

***"Every human person is a member of humanity and has the same dignity," he said, so whenever people are forced to flee their homeland, they must be humanely welcomed, protected, promoted and integrated.***

"Migrants are not a threat to the culture, traditions and values of the nation that welcomes them," the pope said.

While migrants must integrate in their host nation, he said, that "doesn't mean assimilate," but rather share in the life of their new homeland while still being able to "be themselves as people" and enrich their new community. ....

Francis called for more cooperation among nations, saying such multilateral support would help discourage nationalism, political hegemony, armed conflicts and "economic and ideological colonization by superpowers."

When globalization seeks to eliminate differences and smother local identities, he said, it is more likely "that nationalism and hegemonic imperialism

reemerge.”.....

No one nation can provide the common good for its people all by itself, he said.

“The common good has become global and nations must come together for their own benefit.”

Read more:

<https://cruxnow.com/vatican/2019/05/02/nations-stirring-up-nationalism-betray-their-mission-pope-says/>

## **Medivac missteps**

*Refugees on Manus and Nauru were given hope by the passing of the medivac bill, but the reality is just another layer of bureaucracy added to their lives.*

**Behrouz Boochani The Saturday Paper April 27, 2019**

**Behrouz Boochani Author of 'No Friend But the Mountains'. He is being held on Manus Island.**

**After a lot of political tumult the medivac bill was eventually passed on February 12. According to this law, all sick refugees on Manus and Nauru now have the opportunity to be transferred to Australia for medical assistance. Although there was opposition, in the end it was a success for those refugees. In fact, this was the first time in six years that the Australian parliament passed a law that could be considered somewhat humane.....But two-and-a-half months after the bill was passed it is clear that it is being used as an instrument of grief and torture.**

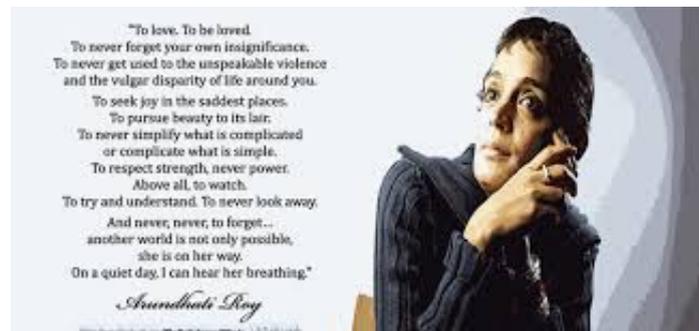
**On the day that the bill was passed, more than 20 sick refugees were lying on Pacific International Hospital (PIH) beds in Port Moresby. They were hopeful that they would soon be transferred to Australian hospitals. Not only have they not been transferred, many of them have been discharged from the hospital in Port Moresby without adequate treatment and put in the Granville Motel. They have been replaced in PIH by others from Manus. During this time I have had the opportunity to visit this hospital. I was transferred to Port Moresby for an interview with United States authorities, so I had the chance to go to the hospital. I must admit that after all these years, after experiencing so many terrible incidents, and after visiting many sick refugees, I was still shocked by what I saw.....**

**While I was shaken by their situation I was not surprised. In this medical system the main objective is not to cure anyone; the aim is to leverage the sick refugee's illness to torture him into submission.....**

This is one of the bizarre aspects of the system: sick refugees have no option but to surrender to the medical system, which itself tortures them. On the one hand, they know they will not receive adequate medical services; on the other hand, without this system they are completely on their own.....

Read more:

<https://www.thesaturdaypaper.com.au/news/politics/2019/04/27/medivac-missteps-rack-sick-refugees/15562872008056>



## UPCOMING EVENT

### 'Gathering the Young Dreamers'

A young adults retreat which will be instructional in awareness, action and advocacy empowering young leaders and giving them skills to empower others in advocacy and 'compassion; the choice of a new generation.'

'Gathering the Young Dreamers' is a relevant response to our gathering last year on the anniversary of Ambrose Treacy's arrival in Australia.

Further details or questions contact Adrian Brannan - 0414826326

For Registration:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdMzk\\_cjl3pUf69qixxoFsw-D9vXhZjGi7gUhm0D\\_mZTMRvbg/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdMzk_cjl3pUf69qixxoFsw-D9vXhZjGi7gUhm0D_mZTMRvbg/viewform)

## REFLECTIONS

Strange, that so much suffering is caused by the misunderstanding of God's true nature.

*Catherine of Sienna*

Asceticism is utterly useless if it turns us into freaks. Pride makes us artificial, and humility makes us real. *Thomas Merton 1959*

"To Christians, the future does have a name, and its name is Hope. Feeling hopeful does not mean to be optimistically naïve and ignore the tragedy humanity is facing. Hope is the virtue of a heart that doesn't lock itself into darkness, that doesn't dwell on the past,

does not simply get by in the present, but is able to see a tomorrow." *Pope Francis 2017*

## **Silence**

**Silence, enforced in camps, prisons.  
Often imposed by forces and powers.  
Tool of never to be satisfied voices.  
Hidden cover for governments' intents.**

**Silence, O' Christ to disarm  
Sharing life from passion and crucifixion.  
Carrying the cross of people, world, creation.  
Offering gift of comforting compassion.**

**Silence, chosen by Christ not imposed.  
Trusting the Spirit with strength and integrity.  
Leaving claims to accuser.  
'It is you who say I am'.**

**Silence, that holds pain  
Of loved ones, world and creation.  
Of women, of peoples first and last.  
With all in their loss of those they love.**

**Silence, offering transformative comfort,  
Gifting unexpected presence.  
Strength for challenging tomorrows;  
For life journeys' unexpected sorrows.**

**Silence, gift of nature and the Spirit  
Inviting into wonder and mystery.  
Revealing priorities for self and world.  
Offering gift of wholeness to one and all.**

**Silence, source of life and wisdom.  
Seek, nurture, value, and learn.  
Welcome its gift of strength, peace and life.  
Enter Silence's challenge - into hope, mystery, and love**

***Br Jude Butcher cfc AM PhD April 24, 2019 (This poem is a revision of an earlier one that was shared)***

We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples of Australia as the traditional owners and custodians of the land. We commit ourselves to actively work alongside them for reconciliation and justice. We pay our respects to the Elders; past, present and future. As we take our next step we remember the first footsteps taken on this sacred land.

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