



Edmund Rice Centre

Awareness. Advocacy. Action

ERC JUSTICE UPDATES

May 2021 No.46

Dear All,

Welcome to the 46th Edition of ERC Justice Updates your regular newsletter from the Edmund Rice Centre, on all sorts of matters relating to human rights, first nations and environmental justice.

As much sadness and heartbreak overcome what is happening in our world and indeed in our own individual lives let us reflect on the words of Fr. Marie-Joseph le Guillou o.p.:

Open your heart to us Lord.

Love is the conqueror, the great conqueror of this world. *Fr. Marie-Joseph le Guillou o.p.*

As always please send us anything you would like included in Justice Updates. Your suggestions and comments both positive and negative or indeed any information that you would like to disseminate amongst the wider Edmund Rice Network - it is all much appreciated.

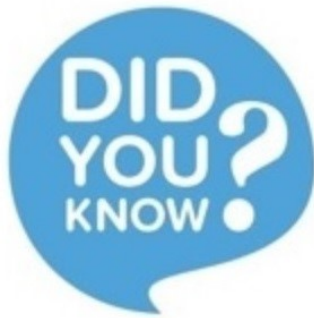
Don't forget to forward Justice Updates onto anyone or let me know their email address and I will subscribe them.

Previous editions are available at <https://www.erc.org.au/newsletters>

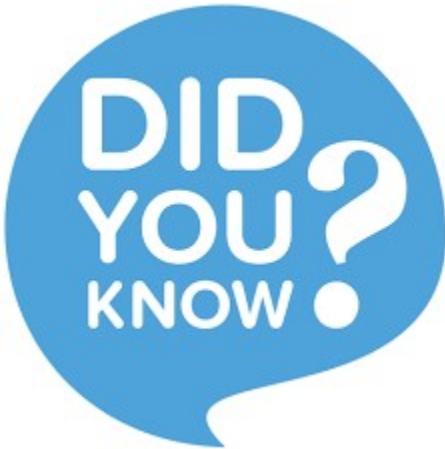
Peace & Blessings

Marita
Communications Project Officer,
Marita McInerney

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that there may be articles in this publication with names and images of deceased people.



On Friday 21st May 2021, the Australian Government will have detained men & women on Nauru & Manus Island/Port Moresby for 2837 days.



In an article in Pearls & Irritations entitled: *The second year of the pandemic is even more deadly. Australians in India are being abandoned'*. Emeritus Professor of Medicine UNSW John Dwyer begins and ends the article with *"If we clever humans can put a rover on Mars we can deliver AZ vaccine to the Australian High Commission in Delhi!"* Some revealing facts in the article are:

- **Eighty percent of Covid vaccinations have been delivered to citizens of the world's richest countries with just 0.8% of people in poor countries being protected.**
- **This disparity is allowing SARS-2-Cov viruses to continuously experiment and improve their capacity to infect and avoid our immune responses to current vaccines.**

An independent expert committee commissioned by the World Health Organisation to look at 'what went wrong', claims that the Covid-19

pandemic could have been and (should have been) avoided. The report states:

- The Chinese detected and identified the new virus promptly when it emerged at the end of 2019 and gave warnings that should have been heeded.
- The report emphasised that some countries "devalued and debunked" the science, denying the severity of the disease. "This has had deadly consequences" and was "compounded by a lack of global leadership and coordination of geopolitical tensions and nationalism weakening the multilateral system, which should act to keep the world safe".

The report recommends:

- The creation of a "global health threats council", to be led by heads of state, to keep attention on the threats of pandemics between emergencies and ensure collective action.
- A special session of the UN general assembly later this year to agree that the WHO must have more power and more funding, while its regional directors and the director general should serve just a single term of seven years.
- That high income countries with enough vaccines ordered for their own needs must commit to providing at least 1 billion doses by 1 September to Covax, the UN-backed initiative to get vaccines to 92 low and middle-income countries, and more than 2 billion doses by mid-2022.
- That G7 countries must provide 60% of \$19 billion needed for vaccines, therapeutics, tests and strengthening health systems, with the rest from the G20 and other high-income nations.
- That the WHO and the World Trade Organization bring together vaccine-producing countries and manufacturers to help scale up production around the world – and if nothing happens, then the patent waiver that middle-income countries have called for and the US has backed should come into force.

Professor Dwyer in writing about Australians trapped abroad writes:

- "I believe an immediate imperative is the acceptance is the acceptance by the Morrison government that it has a moral responsibility to help the Aussie trapped abroad to get vaccinated"

- "The thought that thousands of Australians are not being allowed home AND are not being helped to get vaccinated should be intolerable to Australians and their government."

Read full article:

<https://johnmenadue.com/the-second-year-of-the-pandemic-is-even-more-deadly-australians-in-india-are-being-abandoned/>



National Reconciliation Week 27th May - 3rd June 2021

More than a Word. Reconciliation Takes Action

The 2021 National Reconciliation Week theme, More than a word. Reconciliation takes action, urges the reconciliation movement towards braver and more impactful action.
Moving from awareness to action

The Reconciliation movement is at a tipping point: In the past year, with Black Lives Matter protests and huge numbers at Invasion Day rallies across the country, we're seeing people are understanding the truth and speaking up on issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

More than a word. Reconciliation takes action asks people to take this awareness and knowledge, and use it as springboard to more substantive, brave action.

For reconciliation to be effective, it must involve truth-telling, and actively address issues of inequality, systemic racism and instances where the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are ignored, denied or reduced.

While we see greater support for reconciliation from the Australian people than ever before, we must be more determined than ever if we are to achieve the goals of the movement — a just, equitable, reconciled Australia.

As history tells us, this will only happen through continued and concerted action from those who are already part of the reconciliation movement to those who are yet to join.

Moving towards a braver reconciliation requires a vision for what a just equitable and reconciled Australia looks like.

Actions—guided by the five dimensions of reconciliation—are recommended in the 2021 State of Reconciliation in Australia Report. Growing support

According to the 2020 Australian Reconciliation Barometer there is far greater awareness of the complexity and magnitude of First Nations cultures and knowledges; and many more Australians now understand the brutal impact that British colonialism and the modern Australian state have had on First Nations families and communities.

We are seeing more people speaking up, speaking the truth, asking the hard questions, seeing the hard facts, and informing themselves about issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The 2021 theme calls on others to follow their lead by reflecting on their own contributions and striving to do more.



Senator Malarndirri McCarthy says she has raised her concerns with the NT government.(ABC News: Mitch Woolnough)

NT youth bail legislation shouldn't be rushed, Labor senator Malarndirri McCarthy warns

Jacqueline Breen and Alex Barwick, www.abc.net.au, 10th May 2021

Federal senator Malarndirri McCarthy has voiced concern about controversial changes to the Northern Territory's youth bail laws, calling on her local Labor colleagues to rethink the plan to fast-track the reforms.

Key points:

- Senator McCarthy's comments come on top of criticism by the NT Children's Commissioner and health and legal groups
- The draft legislation is expected to be introduced into parliament tomorrow
- The Chief Minister says the changes are "commonsense" reforms, and are backed by NT Police

The government wants its changes passed through NT Parliament as early as tomorrow, less than a week after the bill was made public and despite questions from legal groups about apparent problems with the draft legislation.

Labor has the backing of NT Police and the police union for measures it says

will cut youth crime, but has faced widespread criticism for reversing changes made after the youth detention royal commission.

On Monday, Ms McCarthy told ABC Alice Springs she had requested a briefing and raised concerns with the NT government.

"I do think the issues being raised by stakeholders in the Northern Territory and indeed nationally about being careful about the incarceration of children and in particular First Nations children is something that the government needs to look closely at," she said

"I would certainly urge the Northern Territory government to reconsider rushing this piece of legislation through.

"[The government] does need to make sure that these stakeholders who deal with our children across the Northern Territory are fairly consulted and have input."

Chief Minister Michael Gunner last week rejected criticism from Indigenous members of his party and the acting NT Children's Commissioner as well as human rights, youth justice and Aboriginal health groups.

Read More:

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-05-10/nt-senator-says-youth-bail-laws-should-not-be-rushed/100128856>



The National Council of the St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia calls for a National Voice to be enshrined in The

Australian Constitution as part of its response to the Indigenous Voice Co-Design Interim Report to the Australian Government.

Although not a First Nations Organisation, the Society has been helping the Australian community for over 165 years. People who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander constitute 10 to 95 per cent of those we assist in any given year, depending on the type of service and location.

National President, Claire Victory said that enshrining a National Voice in The Constitution would strengthen empowerment, self-determination and subsidiarity and that substantial reform to consultation processes and delivery of programs is also needed.

“In addition to support for the From the Heart Campaign, the Society calls on the Australian Government to honour its election commitment to hold a referendum once a model for the Voice has been settled,” Ms Victory said.

“The Society supports the passage of enabling legislation for the Voice to be passed after a referendum has been held in the next term of Parliament.

“And we support a membership model for the National Voice that ensures previously unheard Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the same chance as established leadership figures of being selected.

“Any membership, representative or consultative body needs to reflect the fact that communities are unique and constantly changing; and the body needs to be agile enough to respond to localised issues but have the mandate to address national matters.

“The approach outlined by the From the Heart campaign will give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people a say on the policies and laws that impact their lives. It will also ensure that Parliament and the Australian Government are more appropriately informed in their approach to Indigenous affairs policy and law-making. Ultimately, this will result in better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

“Better outcomes will only be achieved when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are able to ‘live in dignity, to maintain and strengthen their own institutions, cultures and traditions and to pursue their self determined

development, in keeping with their own needs and aspirations' as set out in the United National Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

"On a visit to Alice Springs 35 years ago, Pope John Paul II stated that 'what has been done cannot be undone. But what can now be done to remedy the deeds of yesterday must not be put off till tomorrow'."

Read full submission:

https://www.vinnies.org.au/page/Publications/National/Submissions/Indigenous_Australia/Submission_to_Indigenous_voice_co-design_interim_report/



Govt chooses detention over hope for world's refugees in budget

Media release May 11, 2021

Statement by Paul Power CEO of the Refugee Council of Australia

The Australian Government is allocating hundreds of millions of dollars in new funding to immigration detention – but offering no new hope for the world's refugees in its 2021-22 Budget.

The Morrison Government will spend \$464.7 million over two years to increase the capacity of its immigration detention centres and to extend the life of the Christmas Island detention centre.

The 2021-22 allocation for onshore detention and compliance has been increased to \$1.27 billion.

The offshore processing regime will cost another \$811.8 million in 2021-22, taking the cumulative allocation to more than \$8.3 billion since the Coalition Government's first budget in 2014.

This is despite the number of people held in Nauru and Papua New Guinea

under this policy dropping from 3127 in 2013-14 to just 239 now.

The 2021-22 Budget reinforces the cut to the Refugee and Humanitarian Program announced by the Morrison Government last October, extending this annual reduction to 2024-25. Previously at 18,750 places a year, the refugee program now has a ceiling of 13,750 places,

Australia's cut to refugee resettlement comes at a time when the situation of the world's 26 million refugees is becoming even more desperate as economic conditions decline in many host countries because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Refugee and humanitarian visas are still being issued, but at a rate well below the ceiling of Australia's reduced program.

Unfortunately, few of more than 6000 refugees who have been issued permanent visas to enter Australia have been able to arrive over the past year. This is despite quarantine arrangements which have enabled the arrival of more than 500,000 citizens, permanent residents and temporary visitors since April last year.

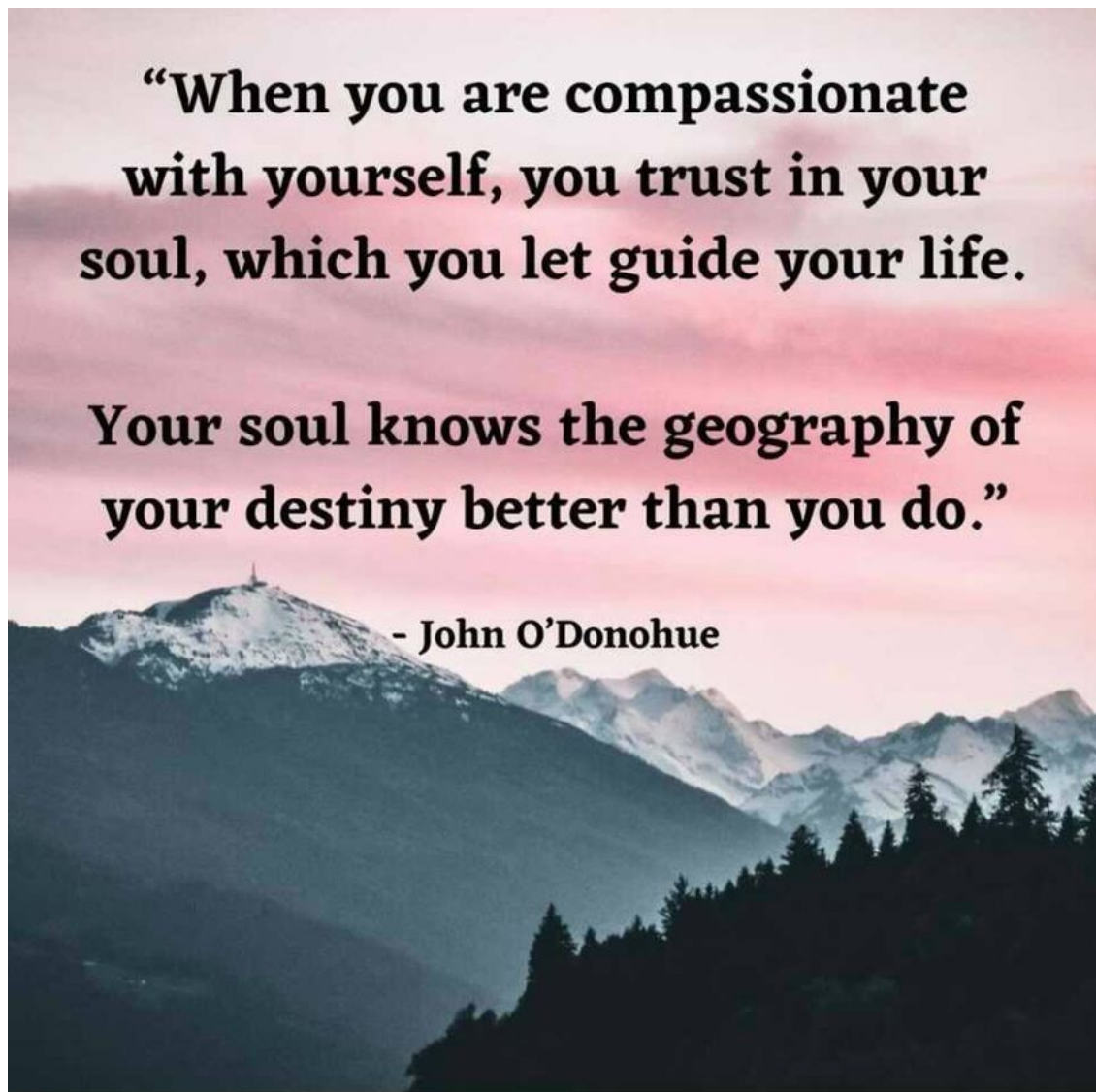
We are disappointed that recommended reforms to Australia's refugee sponsorship program were not announced in this year's budget. Last year the Department of Home Affairs conducted a very welcome review of the Community Support Program, which enabled the Refugee Council and many others to highlight the many failings of the current program.

Given the Immigration Minister's comments on Monday that he is a "strong supporter" of community sponsorship, we had hoped that such reforms would be introduced in the budget. We look forward to the possibility of a positive announcement soon.

One welcome announcement was the Government's decision to spend \$54.8 million over four years to address the backlog of cases within the Migration and Refugee Division of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

This measure is much needed, with 89,536 cases currently awaiting decision – 31,689 in the Refugee Division and 57,847 in the Migration Division.

See the full budget summary here: <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/federal->



Imagining an alternative world: Stories for justice

Stuart Rees, Pearls and Irritations, May 14th, 2021

In the 2019 Australian Federal election, Labor leader Bill Shorten offered diverse policies but never a narrative which could be remembered and shared. To speak about justice, a story could have been more effective than a recitation of policies.

With evidence from numerous countries, the book *Cruelty or Humanity* tells stories of cruelties at the hub of domestic and foreign policies. The stories depict the plight of powerless castes, of Indigenous peoples, refugees, unmarried mothers, apostates, prisoners, people experiencing poverty, homelessness, or

unemployment.

To imagine an alternative world, stories can also be expressed in a language for humanity, starting with references to non-violence.

Non-Violence and life-enhancing use of power

The story of the Covid pandemic is matched by the scourge of domestic violence and in the US by slaughter with guns. In Israel, settlers with fascist attitudes drive Palestinians from their homes. In Myanmar, a vicious military kill their own people.

Violence towards planet earth includes emission of greenhouse gases, felling of forests, pollution of seas and extinction of species. Yet Mahatma Gandhi taught that non-violence was not only a way of living but a law for life.

Non-violence expresses ideals of a common humanity which could be inspiring, as when experiences of music, art, dance, sport and poetry convey what it is to be human. Choice of fashion, decoration of homes, the preparation of food plus hospitality to family, friends and strangers are non-violent expressions which enhance life and harm no one.

Non-violence questions how power is exercised. In families, in workplaces, in corporations, in the promotion of religions and in the conduct of national and international politics, power is too often exercised in a top-down, one-dimensional manner. Inquiries into abuse of children, into the treatment of people living with a disability, or concerning care of the elderly, have documented abusive power.

Such abuse is evident in talk of war as though violence is an obvious policy option, and lessons from centuries of carnage will never be learned. Australia's refusal to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons displays addiction to the time-worn assumption that aggressive power provides security even if it threatens to destroy life.

In and out of uniform, men have liked to swagger, boast of greatness, and ensure their attitudes can be translated into policy tastes for militarization and force of arms. Blind to the principles of universal human rights, liberties can be cast aside, and the leaders of democracies imitate the authoritarian dictators they say they abhor.

The pacifist American poet William Stafford rejected this authoritarian way of

thinking, whether in homes, in management practices, in religious edicts, by government secrecy, by politicians arguing with their elbows or in police violence. In Poetry, Stafford explained, “Sometimes commanders take us over and they try to impose their whole universe, how to succeed by daily calculation. I can’t eat that bread.”

The German poet and playwright Bertolt Brecht spoke about a bread which would be nutritious and should be available to all the world’s peoples. In Bread of the People, he explained, “Justice is the bread of the people ... Just as daily bread is necessary, so is daily justice, It is even necessary several times a day.” (He instructed),

Throw away the bad justice

Baked without love, kneaded without knowledge,

Justice without flavour, with a grey crust

The stale justice which comes too late.

Read More:

<https://johnmenadue.com/imagining-an-alternative-world-stories-for-justice/>



Top energy chief tells Australia to get to net zero emissions before 2050

Bevan Shields, Sydney Morning Herald, 18th May 2020

London: The world’s top energy chief says rich countries such as Australia have an obligation to reach net zero emissions earlier than 2050 but fears time is running out to save the planet by ditching coal and other fossil fuels.

However, the International Energy Agency’s executive director Fatih Birol has

pointed to the benefits of acting fast, with new modelling predicting the 5 million jobs to be lost globally during a technological revolution over the next decade will be more than offset by new workers in a greener economy.

In an interview with The Sydney Morning Herald and The Age to mark the release of a landmark roadmap for phasing out coal and slashing consumption of oil and gas, Birol also criticised countries for announcing ambitious emissions reduction targets without a plan to meet them.

The gap between “rhetoric and what’s happening in the real world” was rapidly growing, he warned.

“When I look at all the countries which have come up with targets and commitments, very few of them have credible energy policies put in place.”

The UK government commissioned the agency’s new report ahead of the climate change summit, COP26, that it will host in Glasgow this November. The work was peer reviewed by international experts including Professor Alan Finkel, Australia’s former chief scientist who is now a climate adviser to Prime Minister Scott Morrison.

Slashing pollution in the energy sector is essential because it represents about three-quarters of global emissions.

Moving the deadlines

The IEA roadmap calls for rich economies such as Australia to phase out dirty coal-fired power plants by 2030 - a decade ahead of developing nations. The electricity network should also reach net zero emissions by 2035 in advanced economies compared to 2040 for others.

Read More:

<https://www.smh.com.au/world/europe/top-energy-chief-tells-australia-to-get-to-net-zero-emissions-before-2050-20210517-p57sq7.html?fbclid=IwAR2AuyI-7QoD3IDFKrD7qXkVjMW9yQxTiupXlqnTHZo9e4vU5P2-5IT7cSI>



Laudato Si' Week: a time for spiritual reflection and environmental action

Sebastian Salaske-Lentern, Catholic Outlook, 16th May 2021

Today is the start of “Laudato Si’ Week”, the crowning event of a special “Laudato Si’ Anniversary Year”, celebrated by the Catholic Church around the world. Six years ago, on 24 May 2015, Pope Francis gave his second encyclical letter “Laudato Si’ – On Care for Our Common Home” to the Church and to the global community. Last year, the fifth anniversary of this important day marked the beginning of a Laudato Si’ Anniversary Year, which now culminates in Laudato Si’ Week 2021, which runs from 16 to 24 May. If you would like to engage in this week’s events and activities, you can find some ideas below.

In his encyclical, Pope Francis called upon nations and societies around the world, but also each and every one of us, to “hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor” and to undergo an “ecological conversion”. For Christians in particular, such a conversion means that “the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them” (Laudato Si’, no. 49 and 217).

Laudato Si’ Week 2021 will be a celebration of the progress the whole Church has made on its journey towards ecological conversion. It will also be a time to reflect on what still needs to be done, what the current COVID-19 pandemic has taught us, and how we can prepare for the future with hope.

An ecological conversion has – at least – two dimensions: The first dimension

is a change of hearts and minds that leads us to recognising “every part of God’s Creation as our kin”. It enables us to develop a spirituality of “communion with the whole of creation. The second dimension leads us to changing our lifestyles and taking action for the preservation and flourishing of God’s Creation – individually as well as collectively as societies and faith communities. Both elements are inherently linked together.

Further resources:

<https://catholicoutlook.org/laudato-si-week-a-time-for-spiritual-reflection-and-environmental-action/>

<https://social-spiritnet/catholic-social-teaching-documents/resources-on-laudato-si/laudato-si-week-2016>



May 14th, 2021

Kairos Palestine Call to The Holy See (Vatican), The World Council of Churches and Church Leaders Worldwide for Solidarity and Action

Thus says the LORD: Act with justice and righteousness and deliver from the hand of the oppressor anyone who has been robbed. Jeremiah 22:3

The Christian Palestinian Initiative, Kairos Palestine, urges the Christian community worldwide to act justly and speak the truth about Israel’s oppressive policies and practices, especially regarding violent attacks on Palestinians in Jerusalem and Israel’s deadly assault on the people of Gaza.

The latest cycle of violence began after Israeli security forces denied access to the Damascus Gate plaza, a popular gathering place for Muslims breaking their

daily fast, and Israel's subsequent violation of the status quo when security forces and settlers attacked fasting worshipers on the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, the third holiest site for Muslims, allowing extremist Jewish groups to gather provocatively to celebrate the 1967 capture of East Jerusalem.

At the same time, Israel's courts again ruled in favor of radical settler groups, threatening some 500 Palestinian residents of Jerusalem with forced displacement from the homes they have lived in for decades. The bias of the Israeli courts and their discrimination against Palestinians in favor of Jewish settlers is part of a larger plan to ethnically cleanse Palestinians and non-Jews from Jerusalem. Kairos Palestine is also actively monitoring the status of church properties near Jaffa Gate and impending forced displacements in the neighborhoods of Sheik Jarrah and Silwan.

Kairos Palestine, the most extensive Palestinian Christian ecumenical non-violent movement, is based on Kairos Palestine document: A Moment of Truth, launched in 2009, affirming that the Palestinian Christians are part and parcel of the Palestinian nation, calling for peace to end all suffering in the Holy Land by laboring for justice, hope and love, embraced by the Christian community, signed by all historically recognized Palestinian Christian organizations, and endorsed by the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem.

Read full document:

https://kairospalestine.ps/images/kairos-palestine-call-for-world-solidarity.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3AWf_AqdP9ssPZNGX0GbAQVfMoyE6ShAzU6954TZQp8QYPhsPOcRNEOYk



Rescue workers assist victims amid the rubble left by an Israeli air strike on Gaza City

‘Stop the clamour of arms!’ Pope tells Israeli, Palestinian leaders

Christopher Wells, Vatican News, 16th May 2021

Pope Francis appeals for calm in the Holy Land as escalating violence threatens to degenerate “into a spiral of death and destruction.”

Pope Francis appealed “in the name of God” for calm in the Holy Land, after seven days of fighting that has left scores of people dead and hundreds more wounded.

The deaths of dozens of children among them are particularly “terrible and unacceptable,” the Pope said. “Their death is a sign that people do not want to build the future, but to destroy it.”

He warned that the ongoing violence in Israel and the Gaza Strip risks degenerating “into a spiral of death and destruction,” with wounds to “fraternity and peaceful coexistence” that will be difficult to heal without an immediate return to dialogue.

The Pope urged Israeli and Palestinian leaders “to stop the clamour of arms and to walk the path of peace, with the help of the international community.”

He called for “unceasing” prayer for Israelis and Palestinians to “find the path of

dialogue and forgiveness, to be patient builders of peace and justice, opening up, step-by-step, to a common hope, to coexistence between brothers.”

Pope Francis then asked the faithful to pray for the victims of the conflict, “especially the children.”

“Let us pray for peace to the Queen of Peace,” he said, before leading them in the recitation of a Hail Mary.

Read full story:

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2021-05/pope-to-israeli-palestinian-leaders-stop-the-clamour-of-arms.html>

REFLECTIONS



COVID TIMES

This poem is the first of a set of five which Br. Jude Butcher offers us for reading and reflection as locally and globally we continue to be challenged by the virus.

Today's COVID TIMES are global, national and local in footprint and impact.

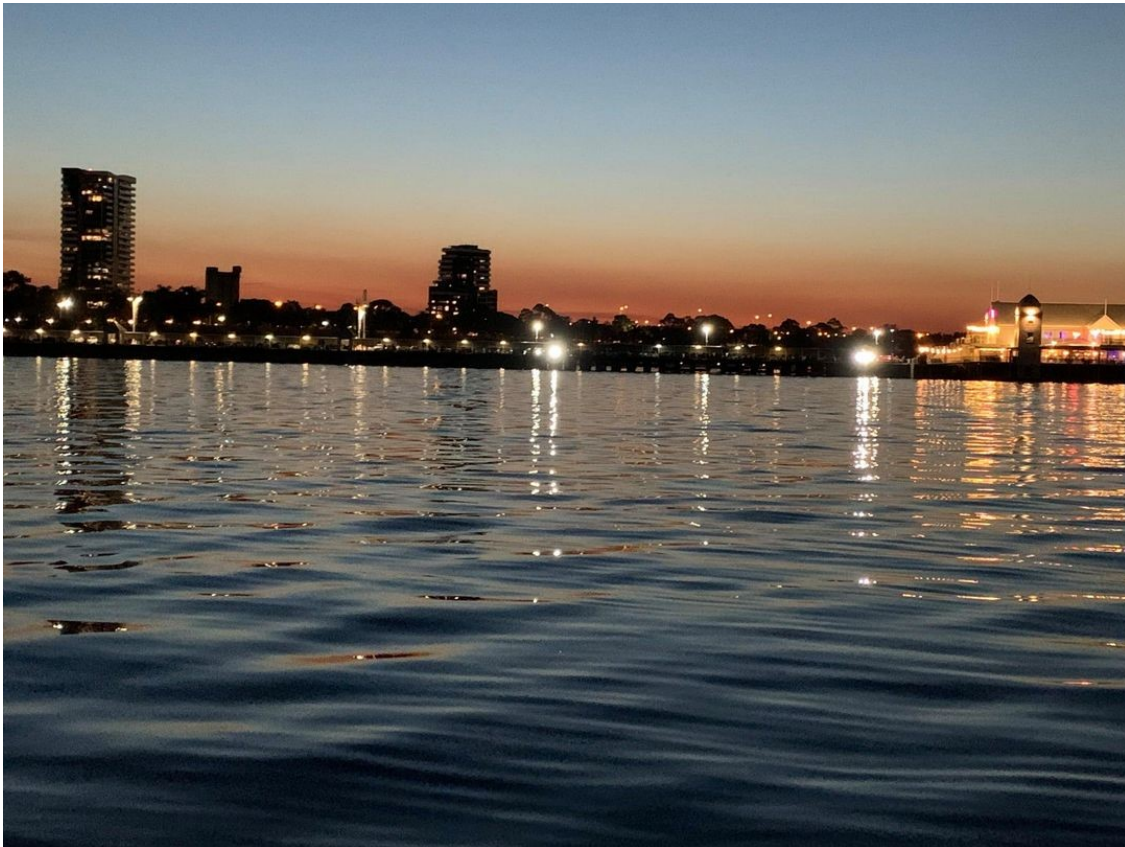
COVID TIMES involve us in passages through time. As people, families and communities we journey through restrictions and partial easings to new and

unknown normals.

Our journeys are ones of pain and distant hopes together with an awareness of things unknown that could lie ahead. The hope people have shared in these COVID TIMES is a gift for us all.

People's experiences, pains, hopes and giving of selves in the midst of their own and other people's journeys with COVID 19 challenge all of us. They have inspired this set of poems.

Jude Butcher March 2021



Jamberoo Abbey Facebook Post 7th May 2021

As evening descends, we pray the blessing of peace...

FOR PEACE

As the fever of day calms towards twilight

May all that is strained in us come to ease.

We pray for all who suffered violence today,

May an unexpected serenity surprise them.

*For those who risk their lives each day for peace,
May their hearts glimpse providence at the heart of history.
That those who make riches from violence and war
Might hear in their dreams the cries of the lost.
That we might see through our fear of each other
A new vision to heal our fatal attraction to aggression.
That those who enjoy the privilege of peace
Might not forget their tormented brothers and sisters.
That the wolf might lie down with the lamb,
That our swords be beaten into ploughshares
And no hurt or harm be done
Anywhere along the holy mountain.
~ John O'Donohue
From his book, *Benedictus**



Pace - e - Bene
Daily Non-violence Inspirations

Wednesday May 12, 2021

"Violence against the Earth and interpersonal violence are two sides of the same coin. We now unite as a planetary community to stand together for the sacred; to midwife a transition to a world in which humanity will no longer dominate but cooperate with all life. Though it is difficult to see, there is an emerging and different vision for humanity. This vision foresees a world without violence as the next chapter of our collective evolution. It shows a future humanity inhabiting this planet as a network of interconnected, autonomous communities of trust."

—LaDonna Brave Bull Allard

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.

The Edmund Rice Centre wholeheartedly supports and endorses the
ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART
and urges all Australians to get behind this wonderful statement.

Our mailing address is:

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