



# Presentation Society Justice Newsletter



Issue No. 4

## Dear Sisters and Associates

In the third issue of our newsletter, we looked at the first eight principles of *The Earth Charter* linked with statements from Catholic Social thought. The theme is continued on pages two and three of this issue with principles nine to sixteen of the Earth Charter linked with Catholic Social thought. Once again we have included reflection points.

The **World Summit on Sustainable Development** is less than a month away. There is still time to contact the Australian Delegation to urge them to support the endorsement of *The Earth Charter* as an ethical and spiritual framework for ensuring sustainable development. The Australian Delegation can be contacted at [wssd@ca.gov.au](mailto:wssd@ca.gov.au) or fax 02 6274 1666 or postal address: Dept of the Environment and Heritage, GPO Box 787, Canberra ACT 2601. Address your letter to: The Australian Delegation to WSSD.

On page four we have disturbing news of recent developments in **West Papua**. We

urge you to support the people of West Papua in their struggle for self-determination by taking the time to send the suggested letter to the UN (page 4) and by your continued prayers.

The issue of mandatory detention for **Asylum Seekers** and in particular **children in detention** is being kept before our eyes by the media. It can be difficult to believe that continued action such as letter-writing to the Government will bring change to this policy. However we believe that there is evidence of a slowly developing groundswell of opposition to this policy within the Australian community. The images of the constant drip of water wearing away the stone and the straw that broke the camel's back can provide us with some encouragement as we continue to be people who try to go 'one pace beyond.'

**Carmel Boyle, Joan Power, Kathleen Tynan  
Society Justice Committee**

## Furthering the Cause of Asylum Seekers

We know that many of you have been writing letters and speaking to others about the Asylum Seekers and Detention Centres.

At our meeting in July the Society Justice Committee sent a letter to Annette Shears (our IPA Networker) asking her to request our Justice Contacts around the world, and this in turn involves all our Presentation Sisters and Associates, to write to Philip Ruddock and Mary Robinson, the High Commissioner for Human Rights at the UN. The specific purpose of this letter concerns the deplorable practice of holding children in man-

datory detention.

We found inspiration and encouragement for this action in a quote from Sandie Cornish: "At the centre of this body of teaching is the dignity of the human person... Whenever the State cannot or does not protect and foster these rights for all within its jurisdiction, **then the international community has a duty to respond.**" (Our emphasis) The Call to Hospitality - Catholic Teaching on Refugees, Australian Catholic Social Justice Council, page 29.

**Keep up the good work locally.**

## Living with Environmental Responsibility

In response to Pope John Paul II's call to "ecological conversion" the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council has produced a free leaflet: Ten Steps Towards Environmental Responsibility. With practical suggestions for action, it provides ideas for living with ecological consciousness.

Available from:  
Australian Catholic Social Justice Council, 19 MacKenzie Street, North Sydney NSW 2060  
Tel: 02 9956 5811  
Fax: 02 9954 0056  
Email: [admin@acsjc.org.au](mailto:admin@acsjc.org.au)  
[www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au](http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au)

We urge you to adopt these suggestions in your community and to share these ideas far and wide.



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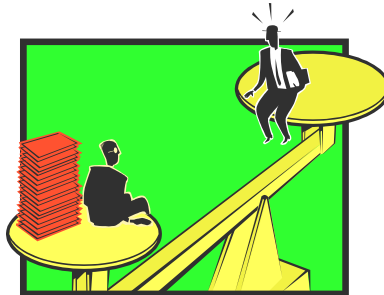
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**We're on the Web!**  
[presentationsisters.ozehosting.com](http://presentationsisters.ozehosting.com)

### III. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

#### 9. Eradicate poverty as an ethical, social and environmental imperative

*Extreme poverty is perhaps the most pervasive and paralyzing form of violation of human rights in our world ... being forced to live in extreme poverty is an offence against human dignity.*



[Vatican Intervention to the UN Commission on Human Rights, Geneva, 10/04/2002]

#### 10. Ensure that economic activities and institutions at all levels promote human development in an equitable and sustainable manner

*... the duty most consonant with our times, especially for Christians, is that of working diligently for fundamental decisions to be taken in economic and political affairs, both on the national and international level which will everywhere recognize and satisfy that right of all to a social culture in conformity with the dignity of the human person without any discrimination of race, sex, nation, religion or social condition.*

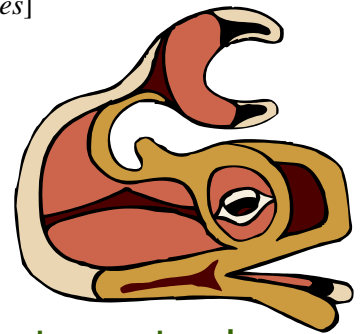
[#60 Gaudium et Spes]

#### 11. Affirm gender equality and equity as prerequisites to sustainable development and ensure universal access to education, health care and economic opportunity

*Recognition of the dignity of the human person, especially women and girls, must be the starting point for fostering authentic human development... investment in basic social services is the bedrock for women's well-being and economic development.*

[Intervention by the Holy See at the UN at the Follow-up to the 4th World Conference on Women, 19/10/2001]

#### 12. Uphold the right of all, without discrimination, to a natural and social environment supportive of human dignity, bodily health and spiritual well-being, with special attention to the rights of indigenous peoples and minorities



*We are all over the world in hard places, for a long time, doing a lot with a little, changing the lives of the people where we are, and when the going gets tough we don't leave and we always come to the table with interests not our own.*

- Sr Carol Zinn SSJ, an NGO representative to the UN, at a conference for *Sisters Online*

*Unjust economic policies are especially damaging to indigenous peoples, young nations and their traditional cultures; and it is the Church's task to help indigenous cultures to preserve their identity and maintain their traditions. The Synod encouraged the Holy See to continue its advocacy of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.*

[Pope John Paul II, *Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia in Oceania*, 22/11/2001, #28]

## IV. DEMOCRACY, NONVIOLENCE AND PEACE



### 13. Strengthen democratic institutions at all levels, and provide transparency and accountability in governance, inclusive participation in decision-making, and access to justice

*The Church considers it to be undoubtedly important to build up structures which are more human, more just, more respectful of the rights of the person and less oppressive and less enslaving ...*

[*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, paragraph 36]

*(People's) personal dignity involves (their) right to take an active part in public life and to make (their) own contribution to the common welfare of (their) fellow citizens.*

[*Peace on Earth*, paragraph 26]

*... a human person ... is entitled to legal protection of (their) rights and such protection must be effective, unbiased and strictly just.*

[*Peace on Earth*, paragraph 27]

### 14. Integrate into formal education and life-long learning the knowledge, values and skills needed for a sustainable way of life

*An education in ecological responsibility is urgent: responsibility for oneself, for others, and for the earth. ... A true education in responsibility entails a genuine conversion in ways of thought and behaviour. Churches and religious bodies, non-governmental organizations, indeed all members of society, have a precise role to play in such education. The first educator, however, is the family, where the child learns to respect his/her neighbour and to love nature.*

[Pope John Paul II, *World Day of Peace*, 01/01/1990]

### 15. Treat all living beings with respect and consideration

*The most profound and serious indication of the moral implications underlying the ecological problem is the lack of respect for life evident in many of the patterns of environmental pollution. ... pollution or environmental destruction is the result of an unnatural and reductionist vision which at times leads to a genuine contempt for man. On another level, delicate ecological balances are upset by the uncontrolled destruction of animal and plant life or by a reckless exploitation of natural resources. Respect for life, and above all for the dignity of the human person, is the ultimate guiding norm for any sound economic, industrial or scientific progress.*

[Pope John Paul II, *World Day of Peace*, 01/01/1990]

### 16. Promote a culture of tolerance, nonviolence and peace

*There is a growing awareness that world peace is threatened not only by the arms race, regional conflicts and continued injustices among peoples and nations, but also by a lack of due respect for nature, by the plundering of natural resources and by a progressive decline in the quality of life. The sense of precariousness and insecurity that such a situation engenders is a seedbed for collective selfishness, disregard for others and dishonesty.*

[Pope John Paul II, *World Day of Peace*, 01/01/1990]

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## SOME POINTS FOR REFLECTION

- How did you feel as you read these quotations?
- What did you learn?
- What can you (and others) do to put your new learnings into action?  
e.g. raising the issue with friends and relations.



## WEST PAPUA

### Keeping you up to the moment with the latest news.

The Indonesian Army now stationed in various parts of Papua has increased its economic returns by plundering processed timber from the local Papuans or by taking it directly from the forest without legal authorisation. The forceful seizure of this timber involves threats against the lives of the locals, beating them with rifle butts, shots being fired over their heads, and the rape of the women and girls in the village. The proceeds of the sales are split in half, one half for Jakarta and the other for the concerned battalion.

In the last few months, three senior Papuan leaders (including one whom Annette and Carmel saw at the PrepCom IV in Bali) have died suspiciously (possibly poisoned), a church has been torched by Muslim Lasker Jihad extremists, and Kopassus soldiers are hunting down three human rights workers in the Central Highlands. The final report on the death of Theys Eluay last November incensed Papuans because of the claim that it was a criminal rather than political killing. There are claims that Indonesia's new military chief, General Sutarto, has been ordered to get rid of the current generation of Papuan civilian leaders.

The International Commission for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is presently conducting a campaign calling upon the UN and the Indonesian Government to stop the elimination of Papuan intelligentsia and the intimidation of the Papuan people. It also demands the revision of the *Act of Free Choice*. A suggested letter to the Secretary General of the UN is included for your action.

## Reminder! Reminder!

### IMMEDIATE ACTION ON THE KYOTO PROTOCOL

There is still time to take part in the national campaign instigated by ACLRI (Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes) to write to the Federal Government urging it to ratify the Kyoto Protocol before the World Summit on Sustainable Development in August in Johannesburg.

If you put aside the Suggested Action page with the sample letter to do later and now can't put your hand on it, contact your Congregation Leader for the **Climate Change Fact Sheet** and the **Suggested Action Page**, or you can access the information on the website of the Social Action Office at <http://sao.clriq.org.au/eco.html>.

## ACTION

### Suggested Letter to the UN

The Hon Kofi Annan  
UN Secretary-General  
UN Plaza  
New York NY 10017  
Fax: 0011 1 212 963 2155

Dear Mr Annan

I am writing as a member of the International Presentation Association, which is an NGO in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), to urge you to personally intervene and order an investigation into the conduct of the United Nations in West Papua during the *Act of Free Choice* in 1969 – a shameful episode in the United Nation's history.

Since the sham *Act of Free Choice*, which unjustly handed West Papua to Indonesia, estimates of the deaths and disappearances of Papuans range from 100,000 to 400,000.

We are most concerned that the UN, which was responsible for supervising the *Act of Free Choice*, accepted the vote of just 1,025 Papuans, hand-picked by Indonesian military and police, and forced, under extreme duress, to vote to remain part of Indonesia. According to media reports at the time, they faced threats that they and/or their families would be killed, and threats that their tongues would be cut out.

The vote as conducted was contrary to Clause 18 of the New York Agreement, which stated that all adult Papuans had the right to participate in an act of self-determination to be carried out in accordance with international practice.

For us as Australians, the people of West Papua are among our nearest neighbours. We are most anxious for their right to self-determination and justice.

Yours sincerely

(Name and address)