



# HOLY SPIRIT SOCIAL JUSTICE

MAY 2020 EDITION

## FROM THE CHAIR

### A MESSAGE FROM FR MARK

On this the fifth Anniversary of the release of the ***Laudato Si Encyclical***, it is a good time for each of us to examine our Social Justice conscience. There is much good work being done by our Parishioners both in and beyond the Holy Spirit Parish in this challenging Coronavirus environment.

As members of a Christian faith community, we are called to Serve. With good communication and forward planning, we can work together to achieve all kinds of things.

So firstly, let's listen to the **[Pope's message](#)** **inviting us to celebrate Laudato Si Week.**



Secondly think about how you, your group or the Parish could make life better for those in need. This includes thoughts about communicating better through technology or other means.

Thirdly share your ideas on Social Justice by emailing Peter Peterson in the Social Justice Group **[peterimantpeterson@gmail.com](mailto:peterimantpeterson@gmail.com)** – to ensure good representation of ideas from all members of the Parish.

Finally we need to work together to really help the disadvantaged in our community and our environment.

One issue I personally feel strongly about is ensuring that remote and rural communities have on line access to education for their children and I know there are people with terrific insights within our congregation and I would love to hear from those people.

The video clip, **[The Great Realisation](#)**, gives us something to think about. Will you contribute to that story?

*Fr Mark*

I hope you get some direction from the many social justice issues currently confronting us under the fog of the coronavirus pandemic. I hope this issue provides you with both valuable information and some insight on the way forward for us to value and protect God's creation.

There are a number of important issues, for example, climate change, pandemic management, the strength of our faith and commitment, and urgent issues including starvation, depression, and managing death rates.

One of the urgent issues, I believe, is depression. **[Beyond blue has reported a jump in demand of 40% for its services.](#)** There is no doubt isolation leads to depression so communication of any type including video conferencing, personal phone calls group chat apps become all the more useful.

So I would like to support Fr. Mark's request, that you look at the links he referred to and I would welcome not only your ideas but also any artistic, poetic or other contributions you might like to make. I believe that sharing our thoughts can only lead to good outcomes.

God Bless  
*Peter Peterson*



### SOCIAL JUSTICE CALENDAR

The following dates are from the Social Justice Diary 2020. This is for your thoughtful prayer.

**16-24 May:** **[Laudato Si' Week](#)** follow this link for online retreats, International Youth Zoom gathering, resources and more.

**26 May:** National Sorry Day

**27 May to 3 June :** **[National Reconciliation Week](#)**

**5 June:** World Environment Day

**8 June:** World Oceans Day

# IS COVID-19 AN OPPORTUNITY TO RESET OUR ENVIRONMENTAL FUTURE?

You may have read about the environment getting a temporary reprieve during the current Pandemic. We obviously can't tackle cleaning up our environment and climate change the same way that we are approaching coronavirus. Its affects have been totally devastating. Nonetheless, the COVID-19 crisis provides a great opportunity for everyone to contemplate a different way of living. Ways that incorporate, things like clean waterways, reducing deforestation, buying local, getting more exercise, talking more to our family, having a better work and home life balance, not letting large corporations be a law unto themselves, respecting the animal kingdom, energy transition away from fossil fuels to facilitate getting dangerous climate change under control, caring more for everyone in society, rich and poor equally; this list can go on and on.

The current Pandemic shows us that social, economic and environmental systems are inextricably linked and we all share this ONE world.



The adjacent link is an in depth look at pertinent issues relating to our social, economic and environmental well being going forward.

The article is by Dr Laura Schuijers, Environmental Lawyer and Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute, Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, University of Melbourne.

*Paul Crowley*

## A final Thought.....

Below is a link to a four-minute video called 'The Great Realisation' presented by YouTuber Tom Foolery. Some of you may already have seen it. In this clip, Tom can be seen narrating a mesmerising tale to his children who ask him about the virus that has hit the world.

The clip sees people across the world valuing and maintaining their family ties, talks about how nature is healing during the lockdown and illustrates the many pitfalls of life before the virus hit, as well as a positive message for after the Pandemic.



It's aimed at children and we think one and all will appreciate its sentiments.

*The Great Realisation*

## COVID-19 IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO RESET OUR ENVIRONMENTAL FUTURE

The COVID-19 restrictions are having short-term environmental benefits, but the crisis also presents an opportunity to plan Australia's low or zero net emissions future

## IN THE NEWS!



### ACT GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE \$450,000 IN SUPPORT TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

Thanks to the ACT government, a new \$450,000 package will support vulnerable people living in the ACT on temporary visas and international students who have lost their income due to the coronavirus pandemic.

ACT Multicultural Affairs and Tertiary Education Minister Chris Steel has announced a new partnership between the ACT government and the ACT Refugee, Asylum Seeker and Humanitarian (RASH) Coordination Committee, the Australian Red Cross and local universities.

[See The Canberra Times for more information](#)

---

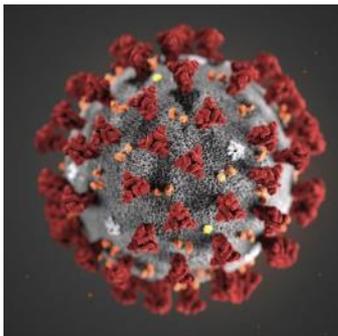
### A MESSAGE FROM THE REFUGEE ACTION CAMPAIGN

Despite the lockdown, **Refugee Action Campaign** is continuing to campaign for an end to Australia's cruel treatment of people seeking asylum. Covid-19 is affecting everyone, but the government's actions show that we're NOT in this together when it comes to people seeking asylum:

- People in crowded immigration detention facilities face an increased risk of Covid-19. The government knows this is the case but rather than reducing the risk, it continues to be more focused on silencing protest.
- People on Bridging Visas are excluded from the government's Covid-19 support measures. This comes on top of the government cutting meagre financial support to thousands of people two years ago. People are facing poverty and destitution.

While the RAC activities have inevitably changed, the campaign has not gone away. While these policies are in place and the cruelty towards people seeking asylum continues, RAC will continue to campaign for justice and for change.

If you have any queries about the work of the Refugee Action Campaign, Canberra, get in touch with them at [mail@refugeeaction.org](mailto:mail@refugeeaction.org).



---

### PROTECT EVERYONE IN AUSTRALIA FROM COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Catholic leaders, including Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen, have appealed to the Federal Government to protect "everyone in the Australian community who is in hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, including people seeking protection, be given temporary access to a financial safety net, Medicare, and adequate shelter if they are homeless" and, further, that the Federal Government "remember its responsibility for ensuring safety and human rights of everyone residing within its jurisdiction, even temporarily. In the same way, we hope that foreign governments will be mindful of the needs of Australians stranded abroad at this time."

[Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Office for Social Justice](#)

---

The following is from the Madonna magazine, published by Jesuit Communications. It is a message from Pope Francis on the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Day of the Poor on 17 November 2019: The hope of the poor shall not perish forever.

### GOD GIVES US HOPE

We can never elude the urgent appeal that Scripture makes on behalf of the poor. Wherever we look, the word of God points to the poor, those who lack the necessities of life because they depend on others. They are the oppressed, the lowly and the downcast. Yet, faced with countless throngs of the poor, Jesus was not afraid to identify with each of them: 'Whatever you did to one of the least of these my brethren, you did to me' (Mt 25:40). If we refuse to make this identification, we falsify the Gospel and water down God's revelation. The God that Jesus came to reveal is a Father who is generous, merciful, unfailing in his goodness and grace. He gives hope especially to those who are disillusioned and lacking in hope for the future.

# PREPARING THE COMMUNITIES IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC) TO FIGHT AGAINST COVID-19

By Lulu Mitshabu, Caritas Australia, Africa Program Coordinator and Diocesan Director Archdiocese of Canberra/Goulburn and Wagga Wagga

The DRC has been facing a complex emergency for more than 20 years, including endemic political instability, conflicts that lead to frequent displacement, floods and the 2018 Ebola epidemic in Ituri and North Kivu provinces. About 76.6% of the population live on less than \$2 a day and depend mainly on the informal economy (day-to-day). With the recent COVID19 pandemic, women, children and vulnerable people are at risk of being exploited and of contracting the virus. Social distancing remains a challenge as people need to go and earn a living every day in order to feed their families and with the lack of reliable means of transportation that constitutes in itself a risk for them.

As a member of the Parish, I would like to bring to your attention the plight of the people in my homeland. As we speak, the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases is growing daily in the DRC. It has now surpassed 1000 positive cases with 44 deaths so far.

*As a member of the Parish, I would like to bring to your attention the plight of the people in my homeland.*

Lulu Mitshabu

With the limited testing capacities, the lack of access to healthcare, the number of actual cases could be far higher. The **DRC COVID task force is now saying that the situation will get worst in coming months if the response is not adequate.**



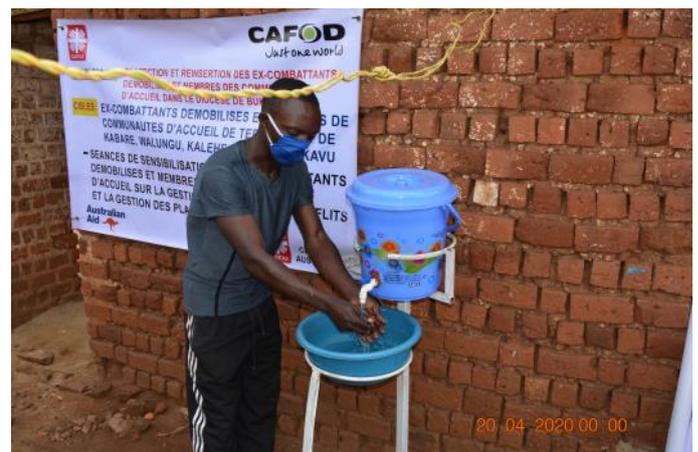
**tippy-taps (a simple hand washing device made with local and accessible materials)**



- procuring and distributing hygiene kits to members of the Savings and Internal Lending Communities associations and groups. These are groups supported by Caritas

As we are going through this challenging time, we are very fortunate in Australia to have systems in place to assist individuals and families to remain safe and well. Unfortunately this is not available to many people in the DRC, **with your support we can make a difference to the people of the DRC by :**

- providing communities with jerry cans for making tippy-tap and organising social and media campaigns to promote their use.
- installing hand washing kits in high-traffic areas.



- organising awareness sessions on COVID-19, community caravans, information sessions and dialogue with opinion leaders, sharing information with them on COVID 19 disease to

jointly find locally adapted solutions through the application of hygiene measures as per the government regulations.

