

Its Time

Term 2

2016



-SJAG-



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A TERM OF JUSTICE

Gillian Daley– Director of Identity

Term 2 is a busy term in so many ways, not least of which is the dedication we have to causes that are important to how we see and enact change in the world. This term has seen the College's Social Justice Action Group (SJAG) work hard in many different ways to ensure that we are living the examples of Awareness, Action and Advocacy, as is our purpose. Throughout this issue of *It's Time* you will see the many and varied initiatives we are involved with and will continue to be involved with. While many other issues and causes come our way, we are committed to three core areas, which also tap into the national curriculum – the Environment, Aboriginal Reconciliation and Refugees. All three are connected and all provide us with the ability to see outside of ourselves so that we may attain a truly genuine Liberating Education.

Below are some short extracts from my Address at the St Patrick's College Founders Day Mass which hopefully guides us to a better understanding of one of our EREA touchstones in the context of our Christian Brothers' heritage...

The Christian Brothers, like their Founder, are forward thinking. I am constantly amazed at examples of all that they did and / or said well before the times caught up with them, if they even have. They knew that education was the key to liberation and they brought this in so many different forms to so many, with their legacy remaining around the world. They are smart, inclusive, educated, compassionate and humble men. There are many of them I have admired greatly over the years for their joy of life, pursuit of knowledge and beauty, their simplicity, generosity of spirit and great warmth. Sadly many of them have since gone to heaven, but I am lucky to have been here when there were still a few brothers on staff. They espouse something that is difficult to talk about, something that is difficult to put a finger on. Like everyone they are human and therefore unique, but together they are a beautiful mystery and the salt of the earth. They are truly doers of the Word, as St James called all of us to be in the first reading.

Many years ago Old Boy and writer, Thomas Kenneally described the Christian Brothers as "social mechanics". They kick started the lowly to be greater than they could ever have imagined. They took those who had little prospects and made them new. Where you sit today were many of the poorest in society and the success of the Brothers not only saw many of these poor succeed as doctors, lawyers, teachers, academics and the like, but their success has led to communities, such as ours, that are far from poor. Like many of the religious orders to come from the British Isles and Europe they gave their lives to make better lives for others. As tough as they may have been and as poor as they began themselves, one could only say 'thank God for the Brothers'. Their complete and selfless dedication saw the lowly lifted high! This is a liberating education.

A TERM OF JUSTICE (CONT.)

Gillian Daley– Director of Identity

They gave a liberating education long before it became a touchstone. They lived it without naming it. To-day we name it, along with the others, to ensure that we never lose sight of why we are here.

In a recent letter from the Executive Director of EREA, Mr Wayne Tinsey, he stated that “There is no liberating education without shared humanity.” As schools we can look at what subjects we teach, then we look at how we teach them, but often the most important question to ask is why we teach them. Why did the brothers teach those who could have been ignored on the streets of Ireland, why did the Christian Brothers, among others, come to Australia to set up schools, why do we teach you today? Simple... so that we can make life better for others. In turn this makes life better for us. We are called to learn, to be better and to use our knowledge for good, for the liberation of those who live in oppression, poverty, cruelty, inequality. Some of those people could be sitting beside you today and some could be out in the world beyond the comfy school and homes we enjoy. This message is not one of negativity or hatred or laziness or annoyance. It is one of challenge and hope and love. The Christian Brothers are a model of love and service who never operated out of fear or hate, nor should we.

Liberation comes from bringing justice and peace, something we need to reach out our hands to do to all people; love your enemies as your friends. The Beatitudes in the Gospel today teach us that God will care for the oppressed and the poor, but how will God do it? Through us! Turn the other cheek, walk the extra mile, give the extra clothing without being asked. Do to others as you would have them do to you. You hear it often, but do you live it?

A liberating education.....one that frees us from our selfishness, one that inspires us to not just do better but be better, one that lifts us up so that we may lift up others. What you want for yourself and what you want for your best mate should be what you want for all – a good and happy life.....

You just need to make a difference where you can and as the great Ignatian spirituality states, be a man or woman for others. Simple.

The young men and boys of St Patrick’s College have been blessed with so much and they learn so much. They know what is right. Our only hope is that they will live it authentically, being liberators, not oppressors.

“Inspired by the Gospel and Edmund Rice, St Patrick’s College liberates the whole person and educates for resilient and spirited men who are challenged to serve.” (SPC Mission)

Gillian Daley

Director of Identity

CALL TO JUSTICE

By Joseph Bejjani

This Term has been one of immense witnessing to and action towards the call for justice. In our community, the Social Justice Action Group have been involved in various initiatives around the College to help raise awareness for certain issues as well as act out their role in the plan of Justice. This has included the Fair Trade Hot Chocolate Stall which was held in the mornings in the Powell Pavilion to sell Fair Trade Hot Chocolate and raise awareness for our community to purchase items that align with this agreement when they are in the grocery store. SJAG members also took part in the SPC and St Joseph's Alice Springs afternoon tea, the Winter Appeal and the Lucas Gardens visit to our college.

In a society that is filled with demand and strain, it is easy to lead lives that are neglecting the prominence of the call for Justice. Justice is not something that may be pushed aside or 'set to the bottom of the list', but rather, it is something that should make up a portion of your life and act as a contributing factor in all the decisions that you make. Social Justice is a vital aspect within our lives as it is pivotal in maintaining the coexistence of humanity and directs human kind on a path of harmony rather than neglect. Justice not only involves the way in which we are called to ensure that all human beings are treated equally with the same amount of respect, but it is the way in which our moral compass calls us to act as a part of the whole of humanity.

We are privileged members of the Kingdom of God who have been born into lives where we are able to act upon the call for Justice. We have no control over the situation into which we are born, nor do we know what tomorrow will hold. Thus, we should use the position which we are in today to act morally and conduct ourselves in the manner that we see fit in order to sustain a code of moral behaviour, equity and love within humanity.

In saying this, I urge all members of the college community to get involved in the initiatives which will be occurring next term and I also thank you all for your involvement in the various initiatives throughout the school year thus far.

Joseph Bejjani

Year 12– Social Justice Prefect

RECONCILIATION WEEK

Alex Collins—Year 12

National Reconciliation Week 2016 was held from May 27, the date of Australia's most successful referendum in which the Commonwealth were granted power to make laws for Aboriginal peoples and recognise them in the census, to 3 June, the date on which the High Court handed down the Mabo decision, recognising the special relationship between Aboriginal people and the land. This year is particularly momentous as it marks 25 years of formal reconciliation in Australia with the establishment of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation in 1991.

National Reconciliation Week celebrates and builds on the respectful relationships shared by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians. The 2016 theme is Our History, Our Story, Our Future which asks all Australians to reflect on our national identity and the place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and rights in our nation's past, present and future. Reconciliation must live in the hearts, minds and actions of all Australians as we move forward to create a nation that is strengthened by respectful relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians. We acknowledge the progress that has been made while also considering the many more things that can be done to achieve Reconciliation.

The SPC community observed Reconciliation Week with the SPC Reconciliation Round of Sport, held on the 21st of May. The firsts in Tennis, Football and Rugby all wore the SPC Aboriginal jersey designed with the help of the students of St Joseph's, Alice Springs. Furthermore, all teams, of all ages acknowledged country prior to play. This was our own small way of acknowledging the thousands of years of history Aboriginal culture provides and the work that must be done to help the Reconciliation process.

The Recognise Campaign has also gained much momentum in recent months. It is a part of the organisation that organises Reconciliation Australia. A few weeks ago the Australian Football League celebrated their annual indigenous rounds in which many teams wore special jerseys to raise awareness for the Recognise campaign and the broader Reconciliation movement. The Recognise campaign is the people's movement to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Australian Constitution and ensure there's no place in it for racial discrimination. This is a chance for Australia to acknowledge the first chapter of our national story, and to forge our future together.

Both Reconciliation Week and the Recognise Campaign are major examples of the work being done to "close the gap" between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians as we walk together in solidarity together for a better future.

Alex Collins

Year 12

**National
Reconciliation
Week**

**Let's talk
recognition**

27 May – 3 June

REFUGEE WEEK

Year 10

Refugee Week is an activity dedicated to inform Australians about refugees and to why they have fled from their country. Australia has given a permanent home to more than **800,000 refugees** in the past and wants to continue this into the future.

“With courage let us all combine” This is the theme for this year's Refugee Week. The theme shows the courage that refugees have and also the courage of people who speak out about this particular issue.

“With courage let us all combine” is the theme for Refugee Week in Australia for 2015 to 2017. This theme celebrates the courage of refugees and of people who speak out against persecution and injustice. It serves as a call for unity and for positive action, encouraging Australians to improve our nation's welcome for refugees and to acknowledge the skills and energy refugees bring to their new home. It is a line in our National Anthem that calls us to justice.

Refugee Week provides us with an opportunity to think about our national values as they apply people seeking protection from persecution and to imagine the sort of country of which a different kind of patriot would be proud. But as people of a nation built largely by migrants and refugees who arrived with nothing but hope, these values are particularly important to us.

These refugees are under threat and we as people should care for them as they would care for us. Millions of Australians are deeply offended by a policy which results in children being locked up indefinitely because their parents had the temerity to hope that Australia might offer them enduring protection from persecution. These refugees have faced distressing and sad experiences. We should speak up and **fight for our nation!**

Christian Guarna, Andrea Calvano, Sebastian Montessano & Enrico Valente

Year 10

BULLYING

Jordan Brewer—Year 12 Student Welfare Prefect

"If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse, and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality." **Desmond Tutu**

Bullying is a virus, to which no one is immune. It's an epidemic that is quickly spreading throughout schools and especially through social media. It is a virus that infects people as the hosts of this virus very carefully choose their victim.

With discussions with many of the teachers, there seems to be an increasing amount of reported cases of bullying. But what exactly is it. Bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological aggressive behaviour by a person or group that is intended to cause harm, distress or fear. In our society, there is a difference between conflict and bullying. Bullying is the completing of an action REPEATEDLY that causes distress to another. It is not a one-off teasing encounter or someone not liking you. It is extremely important that we all understand this distinction between conflict and bullying because there seems to be a misunderstanding of its actual nature.

One in every four students reports being bullied during the school year. This number is not as high at St. Patrick's College however is still a prevalent issue at the school. Going out of your way to intentionally make somebody feel uncomfortable or to directly insult or target them, makes someone a bully. These actions are low, inappropriate and unnecessary. There are statistics that show that many schoolyard bullies have troubling and worrying issues in the future. Many inherit a violent nature, vandalise property and even have criminal convictions as adults. Many bullies actually at one stage were victims of bullying themselves, reasoning for why they became a bully. If you were a victim of bullying or you currently are, don't see need to go out and bully somebody else because of the pain you felt, on the contrary, you should be helping to prevent this virus, because you understand the true pain that bullying can cause therefore you should not want others to feel the same pain you have felt.

As for victims, they can suffer effects such as poor school adjustment; sleep difficulties, anxiety and depression. They can also develop mental health and behavioural problems.

The misuse of social media is becoming a significant platform for bullying, and this is where the true colours of a bully are observed. Bullies feel the need to bully to feel better about themselves. Hypothetically speaking, more often than not, those victims who have the capacity for intellectual and aesthetical distinction is greater than that of the bully, are targeted as this heightened sense in a human being is exploited by the bully as the bully feels inferior and jealous, and that is why bullies do what they do out; of sheer spite and jealousy. They want to be the intimidating ones, when really the bullies are the ones who are intimidated. One can only bully another when they are with their friends or if they have a platform to bully in front of them, such as social media. Isolate that bully, and their insecurities can be seen. They are all talk and at the end of the day their actions of a low act. That is why we need to stand up and take action against bullying.

BULLYING (CONT)

Jordan Brewer—Year 12 Student Welfare Prefect

It's not difficult to combat bullying but it requires the ability to stand up for yourself and standing up for others. It sounds easy but it's not. It's hard to do if you don't know who you really are. In my years at the college, I can do this now that I am older, wiser and more aware and conscious of my actions. The least I can do in my role is tell you all the importance of treating others with respect. We are expected to define ourselves at such an early age and if we don't do it, then others do it for us, giving us a label, and by others I mean bullies. If you see someone being bullied don't be afraid to say something, don't be a bystander, rather show a level of humility because at the end of the day evil only succeeds when good people do nothing. *"Strong people stand up for themselves, but the strongest people stand for the others."*

We have no right to dehumanise people, because we have no idea about who they are, where they come from and the problems they have faced over their lives. In our society there are outcasts, and people who we classify as 'not the norm', but it is not about isolating these people to make them feel even more secluded but about embracing them for who they are no matter who they may be, no matter what religion, race, gender or whether they suffer a disability. The proper way we treat people should come second nature to us due to our strong Christian faith and way of life at the college.

The primary thing we need to understand is the correct manner in which we need to treat others. There is no point going around the playground calling people names, giving them a label, because at the end of the day you do not know what situation that person maybe in. Most of us cannot understand this, but I can assure you all that your words have power. Many people within our College at one point or another in their lives have been victims of bullying. At the end of the day, when you're 40 years old and have kids, don't you want your kids to go to a school where they are safe and happy. I know it's hard for us boys at St. Patrick's to understand but if your son or daughter came home crying because of what somebody else did to them, how would you feel? I believe many teachers in the school with children corroborate this. It's simple; just treat others how you would like to be treated because at the end of the day, you're only doing yourself an injustice by treating others with disrespect.

We are all humans, we all have a purpose, we were all put here for a reason, and through helping and ensuring the wellbeing of each other, we can create a community in which we all feel loved. We can all learn from each other and can all make each other better human beings and Proverbs 27:17 states it perfectly, *as iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.*

Jordan Brewer

Year 12 Student Welfare Prefect



RECYCLING

Nicholas Fazio—Year 12

The issue of recycling has changed significantly to what it was in the past. It is something we are taught is important to do, whether we are at home, or here at SPC. Recycling is a part of society whatever our opinions on it. There are many economic benefits to efficient recycling, but despite this, we find that often it is a minor concern and this comes at the expense of others. Many rich countries will dump rubbish in poorer countries because they have loose environmental laws. Therefore, it becomes easy to simply take this option to dispose of rubbish. This is not something we can stop, however, we can reduce the load by recycling.

Normally when we think of recycling we think mostly of paper, cans and bottles. Recycling is something which has been somewhat disassociated from what it truly entails; it is about reusing, it is ultimately about making the most of what we've got. Recycling now is about reusing what is most convenient to reuse, and on a large scale this makes sense. Paper, aluminium cans, plastics, these are all easier to recycle than a couch. Why then do these easy to recycle materials get so often found in rubbish bins and taken to the tip? This can be considered a waste in many cases and contribute to increased landfill. One of the most detrimental cases of rubbish which is disposed of in this way is plastics.

Plastics take hundreds of years to decompose. Many plastics used commercially are not immediately biodegradable, and so with the increasing use of plastics these materials will continue to accumulate at an exponential rate. This will lead to an increasing strain on our rubbish disposal. One way which plastics are dealt with is by simple incineration, but this is potentially even more irresponsible as it releases toxic chemicals which will make the Earth uninhabitable to life. What isn't burned has a high chance of ending up being swept away by wind or water currents out into the environment. Needless to say, this has negative impacts. Plastics get into our waterways and they harm marine life. Seals, birds, fish etc. get strangled and suffocated by these unnatural substances. Approximately one hundred thousand marine creatures die per year from plastic and about one million sea birds. The amount of plastics in the ocean is reaching frightening levels. For every kilogram of plankton there is about 6 kilograms of plastics, and for every square kilometre of ocean there is about 18000 pieces of plastic. Even in terms of the human environment, plastics which aren't thrown away make themselves an unwanted part of our streets.

These will continue to linger, and there is little we can do about this. However, we can stop any more plastic from contributing to this increasing problem:

This problem would be on a much less shocking scale if the plastics could break down quickly and naturally. This is something which is possible too. Plastics are used because they are durable and can be modified to have numerous properties. However, just as there are numerous properties for plastics there are numerous types of plastics. Plastics can be made from natural sources such as corn starch, and often these natural sources form biodegradable plastics. Therefore businesses could have a significant impact in curtailing this issue, but they do not for one reason; price. Some do use these biodegradable plastics but the majority do not. Often it is difficult to move business to make decisions like that unless they think it is in their interests and appeals to consumers.

RECYCLING (CONT)

Nicholas Fazio– Year 12

So, the problem comes down to us as individuals. Recycle whichever plastics you can. This doesn't just mean knowing what can be recycled in the yellow bins, it involves reusing the plastic bags we receive anywhere. Instead of throwing them out, keep them and then reuse them whenever you would ordinarily take an extra plastic bag from the store. This is what it means to recycle; making use of every little thing you have got. Even better than that, you can bring your own reusable bag rather than reusing the plastic bags themselves. Every year the average Australian uses about 200 plastic bags. This may seem like such an insignificant amount in comparison to the vast numbers of bags out in the world, however, 200 is still a big number. That's 200 less plastic bags that could be out in the oceans or on the streets. It makes a difference.

One reason people sometimes give about why don't they recycle is that they don't have time. The above example of a way you can contribute shows that there really is nothing to it. It can just be a simple change of habits. The amount that someone recycles can vary significantly and some of the efforts people go into for recycling can be time consuming. However, sometimes it is the small things that we wave off as insignificant that can make a difference. We all have a part we can play to help mitigate this global issue.

Nicholas Fazio

Year 12



SPC AND ST JOSEPH'S ALICE SPRINGS

Luke Salamone– Year 12

On Wednesday the 18th of May the College had the privilege of hosting 7 Aboriginal Fellas and 3 teaching staff who came from St Josephs Catholic Flexi Learning Centre Alice Springs. Members of the Social Justice Action Group were delighted to have the opportunity to interact with the aboriginal Fellas to share life experiences whilst recognising the similarities and differences between our different lifestyles. The College hosted a Social Justice afternoon where we shared afternoon tea and were able to share our different justice initiatives over casual conversation. This was very interesting as we, the privileged members of St Patrick's College were made aware of the serious injustices so close to home in Alice Springs. We were made aware of the issue of Racial Profiling; which is the use of race or ethnicity as grounds for suspecting someone of having committed an offence.

The Aboriginal Fellas described to us the hardships in their community where they felt racially discriminated in this way. Although we like to believe we live in an egalitarian society this proves to us that we still to this day falsely associate our aboriginal brothers and sisters with crime related activity. We were fortunate enough to have an insight into an aboriginal perspective and we became aware of the way in which the Aboriginal people felt discriminated against in regards to these false accusations. Through the enticing atmosphere of conversation, we were also encouraged to share our justice initiatives at the College with things such as the hot chocolate stalls for Fair Trade Fortnight. There was nothing that the aboriginal Fellas loved more than kicking a ball around and this was an extremely enjoyable bonding experience for both parties as we were able to interact in such an entertaining and active manner whilst also learning about our different schools and communities.

The afternoon also led the teachers into conversations where they discussed further implementations of aboriginal culture in the College community and this is extremely positive as our relationship with our aboriginal brothers in Alice Springs is growing. This bond is extremely important and should be sustained for future generations. It is exciting and insightful and will have nothing but positive ramifications on the College community as we prepare the foundations for not only a fully inclusive College community but also an equal and united society.

Luke Salamone

Year 12

Edmund Rice Education Australia
Flexible Learning Centre Network

SOCIAL JUSTICE THROUGH THE ARTS DAY

Matteo Pattaro—Year 12

On Friday the 13th of May 8 students accompanied by Miss Lazkin spent the day at Southern Cross Vocational College, Burwood. The day was scheduled with numerous guest speakers in order to express numerous social justice issues within our community, represented through the arts of poetry, song, and dance. We were extremely privileged to hear from Melina Marchetta, the author of the novel and film *Looking for Alibrandi*. She expressed her love for the Inner West on a topic close to home. Being from an Italian culture she defined the importance of culture and the need to connect with historical roots in order to keep this way of life ever-present. With the College's roots firmly planted in Sydney's Inner-West, Marchetta's importance placed on culture can be directly related to students as a result of the emphasis placed upon this factor within the College community.

Cassandra Gibbs from the Edmund Rice Centre further defined the meaning and purpose of culture being from an Aboriginal heritage. She stated "Forgetting our culture and where we came from, we are essentially forgetting who we are", linking back to the importance of dreaming for Indigenous individuals. Cassandra appreciates the satisfaction one receives in belonging to a community or group which provides exhilarating amounts of happiness within one's life.

Christine Olsen and Virginia Small took part in the filming and writing of the film *Rabbit Proof Fence*. They identified an example of social issues within our community including the segregation of indigenous women and the ramifications of the stolen generations upon families today through film. Virginia, in particular, notified the audience of the need for respect and equality within a wider community as it brings about social growth.

This day was one of great learning experience for the 8 students who attended. Not only did it reflect two of the College's four touchstones being inclusive community and justice and solidarity, it reinforced the importance of social justice within our community. This was not only through actions, but also through literature and film providing students with the ability to act upon certain world issues based upon their own personal strengths.

Matteo Pattaro

Year 12



WINTER APPEAL

Jarrad Kwong—Year 12

When poverty is mentioned, people often think about the poverty line. The “poverty line” refers to those who have an income that does not cover essential need. As such, 12% of all people and 17% of children in Australia live in poverty. Of these 12%, currently 105,237 people in Australia are homeless.

The circumstances of poverty that can lead a person to become victim to homelessness include: having little money, debt, a lack of education, poor mental and physical health, disability, reliance on public housing, living in sub-standard accommodation and social exclusion. These accommodations may come in the form of sleeping out in tents and staying temporarily with other households.

As a result, these people, in the times of this harsh winter, can be subject to cold weather that has the ability to deteriorate their well-being. The temperature is seen to average around 3°C to 20°C, meaning that these people, who do not have electricity and heat, will be subject to harsher environments than those with housing over their heads and beds with warm blankets to sleep in.

While donating blankets and clothing may not seem a lot to people well above the poverty line, it can have a major impact on how the homeless have to sleep. Winter has little to no effects on people with privileged upbringings. As a result, people are highly encouraged to support the homeless through these harsh times. It should be known that these people who feel left out of the community, have to see that they are being looked out for and not just left out there to fend for themselves.



On the 14th of May, SPC hosted an event where students were asked to bring items of warmth that were in relatively good condition. This winter appeal has been a great success, with many people bringing in belongings such as blankets and scarfs, to socks and clothing. Thanks must be given to all of SPC for being able to provide these blankets to the homeless. In the nights to come, many people will be better off due to the combined efforts of the community.

Jarrod Kwong

Year 12

OUR PACIFIC BROTHERS AND SISTERS NEED HELP

Cooper Greenberg—Year 11

On the 15th of July, I and 5 of my peers, alongside Ms Rodricks, Ms Daley and Ms Pantoulis set out to the Homebush Edmund Rice Centre for an afternoon tea with our neighbours from the Pacific. Little did we know, this experience would prove to be a life changing one.

The ability to hear first – hand what these people, just like you and me, have to go through each and every single day due to climate change is nothing short of abhorrent, and the worst part ... they contribute the least to this issue.

We, in the western world contribute the most to climate change and yet feel the least affect however these islands such as Tuvalu and Kiribati are literally being washed away due to this global problem.

Right now in these island nations, their maximum height above sea level is around 5 metres. They have nowhere to go. Water is washing in from all sides and families are being trapped.

One particular speaker, performed an original song about her immediate and everyday dealings with climate change

"We contribute the least, yet we are the most vulnerable. Climate change"

It may seem to many that this issue is too big for individuals however I challenge that view. We can all make a stand against this issue through the following simple household steps:

Never leave your appliances on standby

Take a shower instead of a bath

Use a clothes line over a dryer

Buy fresh foods

Start a carpool

It can be seen through the list that this issue is not just a governmental topic but a societal and individual problem as well. We must stand for what is right and stand for the dignity and respect of our Pacific brothers and sisters

Cooper Greenberg—Year 11

EDUCATION IS A GIFT

Percival Reluccio and Andre Volpato—Year 11

“There were 1.1 million full-time school students in NSW in 2009. Of those, 56% (or 619,000 persons) were primary school students, and the remaining 44% (492,000 persons) were secondary school students. Of all full-time students in NSW, 375,000 (or 34%) were in non-government schools.”

It is important that we as a community, continue to value education as a gift, as an opportunity and as a tool for us to achieve what we want. It can be easy to get caught up in things, whether it's social or being swamped with work and just trying to get it done before midnight. It can be easy for us to undervalue education. Many of us students simply see it as an obstacle, only willing to truly engage in subjects we believe to be a benefit to us in our future life.

It can be easy to not care.

Education is a privilege, even if we don't appreciate it, it will have a major influence. But it is important to consider not only education, but attitude. How we engage with all aspects of life will be the most defining factor when applying for a job. This attitude begins to mature more or less during our formative school years. It is during this time that we engage in our education, not just go through it because we have to. If we simply put the bare minimum in our work in school, how will that translate to the workforce?

Education is not just about learning things, but about teaching you how to engage in activity and work. It is hard to put down into words that feeling of realisation, whether it comes instantly or slowly. You can not ignore it. You realise how much value there is in education, in all its aspects.

For younger students, this will come to them later as they reach their senior years. Some realise earlier than others. Education is how we reach our dreams. As cheesy as that sounds, it is true. Not just from the literal learning of knowledge, but of how it teaches us to work and engage in activity, learn and work with others and mature.

Today, education remains an inaccessible right for millions of children around the world. More than 72 million children of primary education age are not in school and 759 million adults are illiterate and do not have the awareness necessary to improve both their living conditions and those of their children. It is also important to acknowledge that it is girls who have the least access to education. They make up more than 54% of the non-schooled population in the world.

Accept the gift of education and take advantage of it, it is an unpassable opportunity which if you let it, will give you more than you ever knew it could.

Percival Reluccio and Andre Volpato
Year 11



FEATURE POEMS

Marco Pecora—Year 12

ITALIAN

Terra di riparo non di invasione,
Abbracciami pure se sono incerto,
E coccola i miei figlioli,
Nati qui ma ancora forestieri,
Sono venuto seguendo mio fratello,
Lasciando le sorelle,
Una amara dalla morte dei miei,
L'altra sforzata a crescere velata in nero,

Mai scordo quella serata,
Quando le lacrime del Signore ci ha diviso,
Il canale scatenato,
Spaccò la terra tra noi come l'inferno bruciato,

Con queste mani,
Rugose e grezze,
Taglio il pane per il mio nipotino,
Sempre con gli sfregi di tagliando canna,

Anego qui nel mio pasato,
Senza nostalgia per il paese lasciato,
Faccio fatica nel mio giardino,
Negando il fatto che sono l'unico fratellino.

Da Marco Pecora

2016

TRANSLATION

Land of refuge not of invasion,
Embrace me even if I am unsure,
And cradle my sons,
Born here but still strangers,
I came following my brother,
Leaving the sisters,
One bitter from the death of our parents,
The other forced to grow up veiled in black,

I never forgot that evening,
When the tears of the Lord divided us,
The raging canal,
Tore the earth below us like the burning hells,

With these hands,
Worn and coarse,
I cut bread for my grandson,
Always with the scars from when I cut cane,

I drown here in my past,
Without nostalgia for the land I left,
I labor here in my garden,
Neglecting the fact that I am the last brother.

Marco Pecora

2016

FEATURE ARTICLES



Dignity and Work:

1. Calling for a 'New Start' on Unemployment Allowances

The Church has always held a special concern for unemployed and vulnerable workers and their families. This concern was clearly stated by Pope John Paul II, in 1981, when he spoke on the broad subject of 'Human Work':

... the 'poor' appear under various forms; they appear in various places and at various times; in many cases they appear as a result of the violation of the dignity of human work: either because the opportunities for human work are limited as a result of the scourge of unemployment, or because a low value is put on work and the rights that flow from it, especially the right to a just wage and to the personal security of the worker and his or her family.

[*Laborem Exercens* n.8]

He said that the Church's solidarity with poor and vulnerable workers is part of 'her mission, her service, a proof of her fidelity to Christ, so that she can truly be the "Church of the poor"'.

The dignity of work is seen in the personal fulfilment that comes to the worker, the wages and conditions that meet the needs of families, and the wealth and relationships of solidarity that support the broader life of the community. The employment relationship involves more than the worker and employer – it involves all those who depend on the worker and the society that relies on the hard work and productivity of the worker. That is why society as a whole has a responsibility to address the causes of unemployment and share the burden carried by people who are denied the opportunity to work.

The Church regards the provision of unemployment benefits as a fundamental responsibility of society:

The obligation to provide unemployment benefits, that is to say, the duty to make grants indispensable for the subsistence of unemployed workers and their families, is a duty springing from the fundamental principle of the moral order in this sphere, namely the common use of goods or, to put it in another and still simpler way, the right to life and subsistence.

[*Laborem Exercens* n.18]



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Dignity and Work Calling for a 'New Start' on Unemployment Allowances

For years now, Australia has been failing in this duty. Payments like the Newstart Allowance are falling far behind community living standards and a majority of recipients experience great poverty and hardship. The single rate of Newstart is \$263.80 – a paltry \$37 a day. The Allowance is less than 20 per cent of average weekly earnings and far less than half the National Minimum Wage, which itself is characterised as poverty inducing pay. There has been no significant increase in Newstart since 1994. Over that time, the Allowance has fallen in value from 54 per cent to just 40 per cent of the minimum wage.

Three-quarters of the 770,000 people on Newstart have been on the payment for more than a year. The poverty they experience impedes their chances of winning a job in a highly competitive market. Currently there are only around 170,000 job vacancies Australia-wide.

The Australian Council of Social Service estimates around 55 per cent of recipients are living below the poverty line. Most are in financial stress. Many are unable to pay bills and often people simply live in debt. In a recent survey of over 75,000 rental properties around Australia, Anglicare found only 21 properties were affordable for single adults on Newstart, and just one for recipients of Youth Allowance.

Agencies like Catholic Social Services Australia and the Society of St Vincent de Paul have been calling for an increase to Allowance rates for decades. We are calling on our political leaders to lift the base rate of Newstart and other Allowances and to index them to average wages. We owe job seekers a genuine job creation strategy supported by decent training and wage subsidies. This is not the time to 'crack down' on people whose right to the dignity of work has already been broken. Increasing punitive requirements or imposing waiting periods is not the way to go.

Find out more

Read the ACOSS Poverty Report: <http://www.acoss.org.au/poverty-2/>

Read the Anglicare Rental Affordability Snapshot:
<http://www.anglicare.asn.au/research-reports/the-rental-affordability-snapshot>

Read the 2013 Pastoral Letter – Time for a New Start:
<http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/publications/pastoral-letters/278-2013-time-for-a-new-start-a-call-to-increase-allowance-payments>

Read the encyclical *Laborem Exercens*:
http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens.html



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FEATURE ARTICLES



2. Calling for the Protection of Penalty Rates

Wages paid for the toil of the working week is the main way Australians meet the cost of living, of starting and raising a family, paying taxes and saving for the future. The Church holds that the wages paid to workers are a key indication of the fairness of a society.

... wages, that is to say remuneration for work, are still a practical means whereby the vast majority of people can have access to the goods which are intended for common use ... Hence, in every case, a just wage is the concrete means of verifying the justice of the whole socioeconomic system and, in any case, of checking that it is functioning justly. [Laborem Exercens n.19]

Around 20 per cent of workers depend on the award safety net and associated conditions such as penalty rates, and hope that the annual adjustments to minimum wages undertaken by the Fair Work Commission will lift their wages to meet the higher costs of living. As has been the case with people relying on unemployment Allowances, however, workers reliant on minimum wages have seen their income slipping further and further behind average weekly earnings and, for some, below the poverty line.

A recent inquiry by the Productivity Commission recommended the reduction of weekend penalty rates and the Fair Work Commission is currently considering the possibility of reducing penalty rates for workers in the retail and hospitality sectors. The argument has been put that, for the sake of our 24/7 economy, penalty rates should be reduced or removed to free up weekend trade and to create more jobs. But the just functioning of the labour market is called into question where, for example, the two million people who work in retail and hospitality could end up shouldering the burden of their employer's profitability or the government's responsibility for creating jobs.

Penalty Rates are an important part of the safety net. They were introduced as a compensation for Sunday work in 1919 and extended to Saturdays in 1947. In 2005, when legislation threatened such basic entitlements of low-paid workers, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference spoke strongly:



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Dignity and Work **Calling for the Protection of Penalty Rates**

Our concern is that many workers, especially the poor and vulnerable, may be placed in a situation where they will be required to bargain away some of their entitlements. In particular, we refer to overtime rates, penalty rates and rest breaks.

They call for these entitlements to be protected.

It would be unacceptable for already struggling workers to be made to forgo penalty rates that are used to top up low rates of pay. For many, penalty rates comprise more than 30 per cent of their wages. It has been estimated that a reduction of Sunday rates to the level of Saturday rates would see a 17 per cent wage cut for restaurant employees and a 38 per cent reduction for retail workers.

And it's not just the workers who would be likely to suffer. Children could see their sports and other recreational activities cancelled because their parents have less disposable income. Alternatively they might see their parents even less as these workers seek additional irregular hours of work to make up for the shortfall in their pay.

Local economies are also vulnerable. The McKell Institute has found that a reduction or abolition of penalty rates for retail and hospitality workers in rural communities would see a loss of pay of between \$370 million and \$1.5 billion each year and a reduction of \$175 to almost \$750 million in disposable income, affecting discretionary spending and damaging the very industries that are calling for the cuts to penalty rates.

Organisations like the Australian Catholic Council for Employment Relations and the NSW-based Catholic Commission for Employment Relations are lobbying strongly against the reduction or removal of penalty rates for these low-paid workers. They maintain:

... an appropriate penalty should continue to be paid for the family time that is sacrificed by those workers who work on weekends, and not reduced. While penalty rates cannot remedy the negative impacts of working unsociable hours, they can and should provide fair and just compensation for some of the detriment.

Find out more

Read the Australian Catholic Bishops Statement of 2005: <http://www.accer.asn.au/index.php/papers/70-australian-catholic-bishops-conference-statement-on-workplace-relations-reforms/file>

Read the McKell Institute report: http://mckellinstitute.org.au/wp-content/uploads/pdf/McKell_Penalty_Rates.pdf

Read the ACCER/CCER submission to the Fair Work Commission: <http://accr.asn.au/index.php/submissions/tribunal-submissions/137-accr-ccer-joint-submission-to-fwc-penalty-rates-case?path=tribunal-submissions>

See what the Justice and Peace Office of Sydney Archdiocese has to say: <http://justiceandpeace.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Act-Justly-Feb-March-16.pdf>

Lend your support

Visit the 'Take the Time' campaign: <http://www.takethetime.org.au/>

Visit the 'Protect Penalty Rates' campaign: <http://protectpenaltyrates.org.au/>



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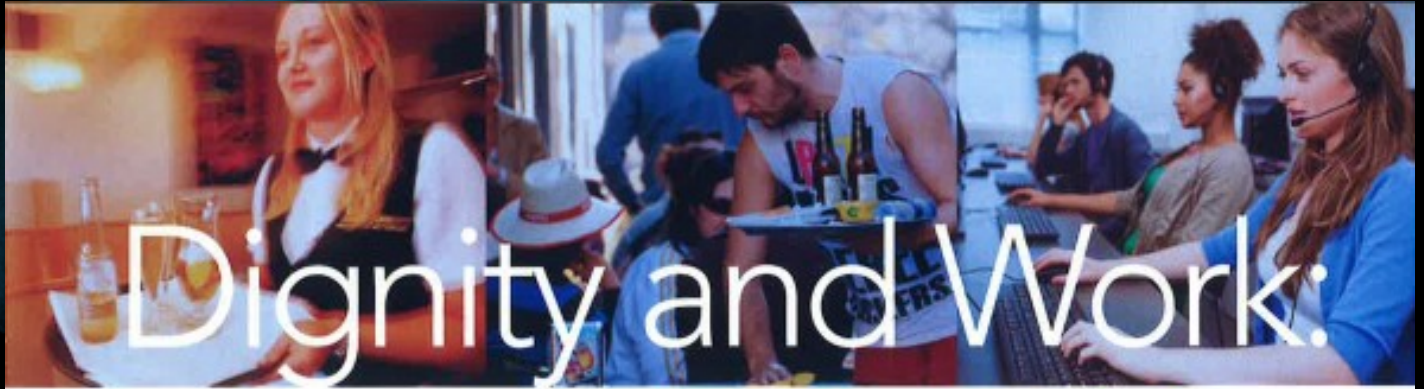
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FEATURE ARTICLES



Dignity and Work:

3. Calling for the Defence of the 'Right to Rest'

The Church says that work is a means to the ends of personal fulfilment, family formation and social engagement. It is not an end in itself. Work is for the benefit of humanity, not the other way around. Time for relaxation with family and friends is a social benefit of work that must be protected as a 'right to rest':

In the first place this involves a regular weekly rest comprising at least Sunday, and also a longer period of rest, namely the holiday or vacation taken once a year or possibly in several shorter periods during the year. [Laborem Exercens n.19]

We are a hard-working nation. An Australia Institute study estimates that over half of Australia's workers are doing unpaid overtime – work that contributes \$128 billion to employers each year. Nearly half of all full-time workers feel overworked and want to work fewer hours, yet are failing to take leave to which they are entitled. On the other hand, one third of part-time workers and nearly half of all casual workers are seeking more hours, no matter how irregular those hours of work are. Households on less than \$40,000 per annum are far more likely to be seeking additional hours.

Anything that takes us away from family and intrudes on normal times of rest is a problem. But it is a particular problem for low-paid workers engaged on an irregular basis and having to work on weekends and public holidays. Think for example of those in the retail and hospitality sector who are regularly in the position of having to sacrifice time with family or friends.

Pope Francis says this intrusion of work undermines the 'true moment of celebration' that brings work to a pause and allows for personal reflection, the gathering of family and friends and important communal engagement in worship, recreation and cultural events:

The time for rest, especially on Sunday, is ordained for us so that we can enjoy what is not produced and not consumed, not bought and not sold. Instead we see that the ideology of profit and consumerism even wants to feed on celebration: it too is sometimes reduced to a 'business', to a way of making and spending money ... It harms true labour and consumes life.



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC SOCIAL JUSTICE COUNCIL

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Dignity and Work Calling for the Defence of the 'Right to Rest'

We need to reject the notion that the weekend can be sacrificed to a '24/7 economy' or that Sunday is 'just another day' in the trading cycle. Most Australians work Monday to Friday between 8.00 am and 6.00 pm and Sunday remains predominantly a non-work day. It is the consensus of Australians that those having to work on weekends, particularly Sundays, should be compensated for their sacrifice of common time. An Essential Media Poll has found that 81 per cent of people surveyed believe that employees working irregular hours should receive penalty rates. Around 70 per cent oppose cutting weekend and public holiday penalty rates. If workers are required to work irregular hours, they should be fairly compensated.

It is time for us to rediscover the importance of the Sabbath for our own good and the good of our families and community. In their 2012–2013 Social Justice Statement, the Australian Catholic Bishops said that the biblical notion of Sabbath offers an antidote to the frenetic competition for time that intrudes so much into family life. It is not simply a prohibition against working on Sundays, but involves the promotion of personal and family fulfilment through worship, relaxation and freedom from the demands of the working week.

Sabbath informs our concern for social justice for the most vulnerable workers. For on the Sabbath, people are freed from the bonds of being producers or consumers. We do not have someone looking over our shoulder or watching the clock. On this day we are not defined by what we do or what status we hold in the workplace. It is also a time of equity and justice; everyone shares the 'right to rest', not just those who can afford it.

Find out more

Read the Bishops' Statement, *The Gift of Family in Difficult Times*:

<http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/files/SJSandresources/2012-SJS-Statement.pdf>

Read Pope Francis' words on Sabbath and the family:

https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150812_udienza-generale.html

Here is an interesting article, 'Recovering the Sabbath' from *ABC Religion and Ethics*:

<http://www.abc.net.au/religion/articles/2014/09/29/4096774.htm>

The Australia Institute paper, *Workin' 9 to 5.30*, can be found here: <http://www.tai.org.au/content/workin-9-530-unpaid-overtime-and-work-life-balance>

The Essential Media Poll on penalty rates can be found here: <http://www.essentialvision.com.au/tag/penalty-rates>

Lend your support

Visit the 'Save our weekends' campaign: <http://www.saveourweekend.org.au/>



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