

AUSVANGELIST

NEWSLETTER OF THE CATHOLIC ENQUIRY CENTRE



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From the Director



If we are not living a life of justice, aware of the needs of those in our community and our world who are vulnerable, we are not living the Catholic faith.

It doesn't matter how you dress it up: a life of prayer, Church attendance and the reception of the sacraments is only of any significance if it provides you with the spiritual strength you need to reach out to others. As Jesus himself would say: "Not everyone who says to me 'Lord' 'Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but those who do the will of my Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). And what is the will of our Father in heaven? That we look after those in need (Matthew 25: 34 and following).

This is the background to Social Justice Sunday, observed in Australia this year on 30 September. See <http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/> for more information. The document put out by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference to mark this important reminder of our obligation to act with justice, is called "A Place to Call Home: Making a Home for Everyone in Our Land". Besides echoing the name of a popular television program, the document reminds us of the needs of those who are displaced in our world.

The following is largely taken from a summary of the Bishops statement:

We are called to confront the growing challenge of homelessness and housing insecurity in Australia. The latest Census figures show that more than 116,000 Australians are homeless – something unacceptable for a rich and well-resourced nation like ours.

Yet these people are only the tip of the iceberg: welfare agencies report growing numbers of families and individuals struggling to meet the cost of mortgages or rents and turning to specialist housing services, which are often unable to meet demand. The Scriptural basis of the Statement is Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30–35), about an outsider who does something that rich and influential men refuse to do: he stops to help a man in desperate need, takes him to safety and pays for his care.

The Statement also draws on the example of Pope Francis, who has reached out to men and women on the streets of Rome and reminded us forcefully of the rights of people experiencing homelessness around the world. The Bishops consider the extent of our housing crisis and Australia's falling rates of home ownership. They focus especially on those in our society who are most vulnerable to housing insecurity and homelessness. We are reminded that safe and secure housing is a human right, asserted both by the Church's social teaching and by the Declaration of Human Rights. Homelessness is a challenge for all levels of society: for government, for Church and community, and for us as individuals. Each one of us can make a difference and, when we join with others, we can be a real force for change that ensures everyone has a place to call home.

Helping to form Catholics in their understanding of what it means to assist those in need is one of the central tasks of the Catholic Enquiry Centre through its mother agency: the National Centre for Evangelisation. We remain very grateful for any spiritual and financial assistance you can provide.

Wishing you every blessing.

Shane Dwyer
Director

National Centre for Evangelisation (NCE) |
Catholic Enquiry Centre

Welcome!



The NCE welcomes Marcus Amann to the team. Marcus is commencing in the role of Mission Projects Officer. As an adult convert to the Catholic Church, he comes to the NCE after a diverse background in RE and English teaching, and was a writer for Hewlett Packard for many years. He is looking forward to helping others live and proclaim their faith through the work of the NCE.



Catholic Enquiry Centre

Reaching out in faith
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

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FOR OUR SUPPORTERS AND DONORS

Your donation helps to provide a copy of *Call and Response: An Introduction to the Catholic Faith* for someone who has indicated that they want to know more about Jesus Christ and his Church. We thank you for your ongoing support, in both spiritual and practical ways, for those who receive the information on the Catholic faith. Sharing the gift of faith is the best gift you can give.

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Mission Projects



Dear Friends

It is a few months since you have received an update about the various projects being undertaken by the Catholic Enquiry Centre (CEC).

As you are probably aware the CEC is a major work of the National Centre for Evangelisation, which is part of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. For the last few months we have been very involved in the preparation and delivery of the Proclaim Conference which was held in Brisbane. One of the key objectives of Proclaim is to renew and revitalise parish

life. This is so critical because we need to have more parishes that will welcome, with open arms, all those who are searching for God. Sometimes, I feel quite sad when I ring a parish and ask them if they have a program or a way of helping people interested in the Catholic faith and they say they have nothing to offer. How can this be? If you are in a parish like this get in touch with us. We can link you with some great people around Australia who are passionate about helping parishes who want to start the Rite of Christian Initiation process or other initiatives to help people experience a sense of belonging.

For those of you who like a few statistics I'm pleased to let you know that we are

being kept very busy in distributing resources about our Catholic faith. So far this year we have given away over 460 copies of Call and Response: An Introduction to the Catholic Faith. Since December last year we have sold about 3500 copies of our prayer resource, Discovering Prayer. We have responded to over 540 enquiries that have come to us via telephone or email. So thank you to those who support us via prayer, financial assistance or simply spreading the word about the work we do.

Peace and joy.

Sharon Brewer
Mission Coordinator

Inspiration



MAKING OLD STRENGTHS ANSWER NEW NEEDS – NEW WAYS TO EVANGELISE

Monica Phelan lives by the principle 'take every opportunity you have to do good'. The inspiration for this came from her Catholic family (three of her uncles were priests) and immersion in Catholic culture as she grew up. This left her with an appreciation of the dignity of the individual and belief in the common good.

Perhaps this is why her eyes light up as she speaks of the homeless men who talk a lot because they don't talk to anyone during the day, or others who appreciate being able to lie flat because they sleep in their cars. Monica meets these people when she is rostered with two others - 7 pm to 7 am - to spend the night with the marginalised and vulnerable in Canberra in the middle of winter.

With 140 others Monica is a Safe Shelter volunteer offering emergency overnight accommodation. Empty church halls from the Anglican and Uniting Churches and the Salvation Army are repurposed, offering hot drinks and a safe night on the floor – for the volunteers too. Clear rules for the men and training for volunteers

mean there are minimal problems, and in the morning the men can walk into town for a free hot breakfast.

Monica notes their diversity, how articulate they can be, and how concerned they are for the other homeless around them. Whenever she is rostered she is very pleased to have done it. She got the idea to volunteer from Mother Teresa's way of dealing with the poor in solidarity, by spending time with people who have suffered. The people who come to help become the face of Christ to the poor and in turn receive the 'Good News' through the experience.

IN GRATITUDE

The Catholic Enquiry Centre continues to remember with great appreciation the precious contributions of all our donors. Your prayer and financial support makes possible our work of reaching out in faith to spread the Good News of Christ Australia wide.

As a measure of our sincere gratitude to all who support our work, please be assured of our regular prayers for you and your families. We hope and pray that your giving is richly rewarded, both in this life and in the life to come.

YOUR WILL

The Catholic Enquiry Centre benefits from the generosity of many of our donors and supporters, even after they are no longer able to contribute on a regular basis. Those who have died and left a bequest to the Catholic Enquiry Centre give a gift which keeps on giving.

After meeting all ordinary obligations in your Will, you may consider a bequest supporting the Catholic evangelisation of our nation. The Catholic Enquiry Centre can supply a form of words for such an intention to your legal advisors.

"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back."

Luke 6:38

Agents of Evangelisation Network (AEN)

As a response to the following words from Pope Francis, the National Centre for Evangelisation established the Agents of Evangelisation Network (AEN) in July 2018.

“In virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples.”

Matthew 28:19

“All the baptised, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelisation, and it would be insufficient to envisage a plan of evangelisation to be carried out by professionals while the rest of the faithful would simply be passive recipients.”

Evangelii Gaudium #120

MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the AEN is open to anyone who wishes to contribute to the task of evangelisation in Australia either by sharing their wisdom, resources or time as well as those who are seeking assistance with how to go about sharing their faith. As our own resources grow, and as we become aware of others, we will be endeavouring to share them with all members of this network.

If you would like to join the AEN, or simply wish to find out more, please complete and submit the form found at this link: <https://nce.catholic.org.au/networks/agents-of-evangelisation-network>

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