

SPC News

OCTOBER 2015

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Time for inspired leadership

Peter Whiting

Millions of people have been mesmerised by Pope Francis speaking to the joint sitting of US Congress and the United Nations General Assembly. What is it about him that attracts such attention, even from many people who are not believers in any religion?

I would suggest he speaks with great respect for his audiences, for their conscience decisions, for their cultural and religious diversity. He speaks as a fellow traveller on the journey of life.

But he also challenges by calling on our 'better angels', our aspirations for peace and justice in the world, our longings to see human beings everywhere flourish in harmony with our environment and planet.



Pope Francis at Saint Patricks Cathedral NYC,
Jeffrey Bruno. flickr cc.

This is the type of leadership we are looking for in Australia. And in Europe.

In Europe, the flood of Syrian refugees has seen some countries closing their borders, while others are generously responding to the plight of the refugees. The European Union itself is struggling to find a united and equitable response among member countries. It urgently needs inspired leadership.

Good leadership for Australia

In Australia, Malcolm Turnbull has replaced Tony Abbott as prime minister, promising a consultative leadership style. His party is hoping he will present a popular image and improve its chances of reelection. Undoubtedly, 'leadership style' matters, but what would inspired political leadership look like in these turbulent times?

Many Australians are looking for a coherent 'vision' of where we are heading and what sort of nation we aspire to being.

Some thoughts:

- The striking outpouring of support in Australia for Syrian refugees suggests we have not lost our

Forum for parishes & agencies How we can support asylum seekers in action & advocacy



Wednesday 14 October 9am-3:30pm

St Ambrose's Community Centre 287 Sydney Road Brunswick

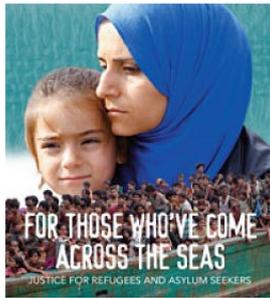
Guest speakers include Phil Glendenning and Sr Brigid Arthur

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www.css.org.au. Bookings www.trybooking.com./IDS.R.

compassion for those in need. The change in government policy to settle an extra 12,000 Syrian refugees over four years was widely welcomed. Australians still see our country as prosperous, and able to help and protect those who need it.

- As for our refugee policies, the Catholic bishops have released their 2015 social justice statement calling for the closure of the detention centres on Manus Island and Nauru, with their 1600 asylum seekers, and negotiating with our neighbouring countries to set up a regional processing centre for refugees. The statement, *For Those Who've Come Across the Seas: Justice for Refugees & Asylum Seekers*, is strongly supported by the National Council of Churches and other religious and civil groups. They are insisting on humane reforms to our shockingly cruel treatment of asylum seekers.
- Several recent reports confirm that, in Australia, the rich are becoming richer and the poor poorer. It is reported that the top seven income earners hold more wealth (\$56 billion) than the 1.73 million households in the bottom 20 per cent (\$54 billion). Inequality is rising, and recent talk about reducing welfare payments will only exacerbate this. For decades in Australia, we have prized our egalitarian values; our vision would highlight reducing inequity and taking positive steps to restore equity.
- Where are we on the climate change and sustainability agenda? Good leaders would recognise that the climate crisis is real, and it is vital that we prepare for the inevitable challenges we face. As a wealthy country, we also have responsibility to assist other less wealthy nations to respond.
- Australia has recently extended its military activity in the Middle East to include bombing sites in Syria which are believed to be ISIS strongholds. What does it say of our nation when our response to international crises is to increase military spending while at the same time sharply cutting our foreign aid?

Recent budget cuts of almost \$4 billion over four years have placed Australia at the 20th ranking of international donors, down from 13th. For Australia to play its part to increase equity in the world means strongly embracing the Sustainable Development Goals and restoring the severe funding cuts for overseas aid.



Church calls for humane treatment of asylum seekers

Michael Walter

Australia's Catholic bishops, in their 2015 *Social Justice Statement*, call for an increase in our intake of refugees, for immediate closure of offshore

detention centres on Manus Island and Nauru, and for all of us to build communities which welcome and support asylum seekers.



2015-09-27 14:35:08 ILCE-6000_CSC02257 Miguel Discart, flickr cc.

Resettling Syrian & Iraqi refugees: a program for government-community action

Arja Keski-Nummi & Libby Lloyd

Australians have welcomed the announcement from our government that Australia will accept 12,000 Syrian and Iraqi refugees, with a focus on resettling women, children, and families who have sought refuge and are in camps in Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey. This takes to 25,750 the total number of refugees resettled this year in Australia. Now the hard work begins.



Speaker John Boehner welcomes Pope Francis of the Holy See to the United States Capitol, Speaker John Boehner, flickr cc.

Pope Francis in the USA: reshaping the global agenda

Bruce Duncan

Pope Francis has not resiled from his strong critiques in his recent encyclical, *Laudato Si*, of unregulated and unjust economic systems, despite criticism of some

of his economics. His central themes include concern about the environment and climate change, and ending social and economic exclusion of the weak and marginalised. He particularly mentioned the need for firm agreements at the Paris Conference on Climate Change in December.

Address

“Justice is inevitable, like birth”

Part of Anti-Poverty Week

Thursday 15 October 10am cuppa for 10:30-noon

Dr John Falzon CEO St Vincent de Paul National Council

MC Michael Walter Youth & Education Development Team

RSVP 8 October rsvp@sudp-vic.org.au | 03 9895 5935



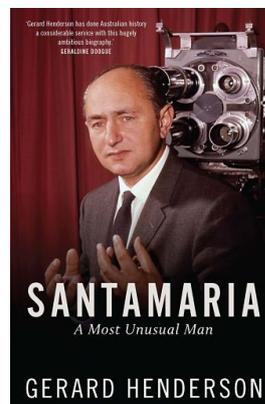
Pope Francis meeting United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in the Vatican 28 April 2015, l'Osservatore Romano, flickr cc.

Pope works to reconcile Catholic teaching, population pressures, & sustainable development

Bruce Duncan

The Pope is aware of the problems arising from rapid population growth, especially in light of

environment issues. He has written his encyclical, *Laudato Si*, with two major events in mind—the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to be endorsed by 193 countries at the UN General Assembly, and the second session of the Synod of Bishops discussing family matters in Rome 4-25 October.



Crusader or conspirator? Henderson's biography of Santamaria

Reviewed by Bruce Duncan

This biography of the energetic, influential, and deeply divisive Catholic activist B A Santamaria has been eagerly awaited. Gerard Henderson joined Santamaria's National Civil Council in the mid-1970s, and worked for Santamaria

himself in 1970-71, before eventually breaking with the organisation in the mid-1970s. He offers a valuable insider's view of a complex man.

Public Forum

Peace in Australia: the untold story

From military security to human security: beyond the Cold War & the War on Terror

Monday 26 October 7-9:30pm

Unitarian Peace Memorial Church 110 Grey Street East Melbourne
Launch of the Peace Museum

The road taken: from Vietnam to Afghanistan & Iraq
Emeritus Professor Joseph Camilleri OAM

The Road we must travel

Professor Camilleri in conversation with Professor Jacqui True, Professor Robyn Eckersley, and Associate Professor Marianne Hanson

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Books at SPC

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- ❑ *Working with disaster: clergy & bushfires* Dr Lisa Jacobson \$10+\$5 postage & handling.
- ❑ *Social justice & the churches: challenges & responsibilities* Edited by John D'Arcy May \$25+\$5 postage & handling.
- ❑ *A world united or a world exploited? Christian perspectives on globalisation* Edited by Peter Price \$20+\$5 p&h.
- ❑ *Social justice: fuller life in a fairer world* Bruce Duncan \$25+\$5 p&h.
- ❑ *Young people, faith, & social justice* Joan Daw \$20+\$5 p&h.
- ❑ *Sufficient for the day: towards a sustainable culture* Geoff Lacey \$15+\$5 p&h.
- ❑ *Towards a better world* Arthur Gibbs \$10+\$5 p&h.