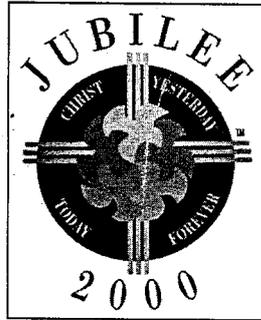


A 15-point plan for reflection and action

2000 years of Jesus



Christians recognise that Jesus is the permanent embodiment of the Israelite belief that the Jubilee year is a time of liberation and reconciliation. Jesus spoke of this in terms of the 'reign of God' already growing in the world through the mysterious action of the Holy Spirit. His disciples had the far from easy task of living out this ideal in practice.

Fr BRUCE DUNCAN compiled the following points which represent one attempt to think through how we might respond to the challenge of the Jubilee Year.

1 Jubilee 2000 presents Catholics with a marvellous opportunity not just of marking 2000 years since Jesus' birth but of generating a process of reflection on and participation in the core message of Jesus, as portrayed in Luke's Gospel. If we grasp how central the social dimension of the Gospel is to the celebration of the Jubilee, we will have gained significantly in our awareness.

2 The Jubilee offers great

possibilities for ecumenical collaboration, even more so than the papal visits of recent decades.

3 We must be sensitive to the Jewish dimension of the Jubilee. We should acknowledge the Jewish origins of the Jubilee and dialogue with the Jewish community.

4 We must heed the Pope's words that the Jubilee must not be an occasion for triumphalism or superficial religiosity.

5 For reconciliation to be genuine, it must deal with painful past errors by the Church or its representatives. The Pope has given the lead in this, rehabilitating Galileo and initiating enquiries into anti-Semitism in the Church, the Inquisition and possibly the Crusades. The Pope has also invited western nations to examine their involvement

in colonialism in the past, and current injustice in international economic relations.

6 We in Australia need to address special issues relating to our own situation. Among these are: Aboriginal reconciliation, ecumenical relations, the White Australia Policy and immigration today and sexual abuse by some clergy or religious.

7 We need to find an appropriate ritual and liturgy for solemnising the Jubilee. Perhaps the approach should be a humble one arising out of the particular contexts of reconciliation. For instance,

Aboriginal reconciliation requires a special liturgical approach drawing from Aboriginal culture and forms of expression.

8 The process of reflection, prayer and participation should be given an important place in the celebration of the Jubilee. Elements of this could be the preparation of programs for clergy and teachers, parish discussion groups and schools, as well as the highlighting of key moments in the Sunday Church calendar, such as Aboriginal Sunday, Social Justice Sunday and Project Compassion Sunday.

9 The emphases during

the Jubilee Year should be practical as well as spiritual. The debt remission program for the poorest countries is one example of this. Another is the critique of consumerism and capitalism, with their attendant evils.

10 Other sensitive issues such as gender should be the subject of reconciliation.

11 Pastoral steps could be taken for those divorced and remarried, for homosexuals and for those who for some reason are alienated from the Church.

12 We could widen our understanding of our Australian identity to include all ethnic groups who are part of our society.

13 Attempts could be made, as in the United States, to bring the so-called left and right groups in the Church closer together.

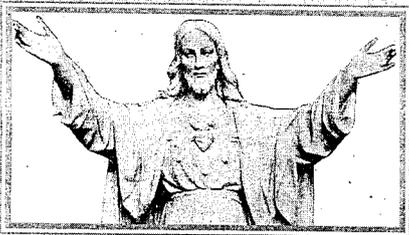
14 We should encourage reconciliation in families in which hurts and conflicts have created divisions.

15 Young people should be included in the preparations for the Jubilee Year, helping to shape the society in which they will be living their adult lives.

The celebration of the Jubilee can sharpen the focus on the mission of Jesus and reveal the heart of the Gospel message.

The word Jubilee is a powerful one, bringing together all the great themes of modern human struggle and longing: freedom, liberation, social equity, solidarity, forgiveness, healing, salvation and intimacy with God.

Fr Bruce Duncan CSsR works in Melbourne Catholic Social Services.



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