



## The UN Millennium Goals As A Godsend

by Bruce Duncan CSsR

### Speaking at the national launch of *Ending Hunger – how far can we go?*

Thanks to all of you here today, and especially to the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council for inviting me to write this booklet, *Ending hunger – how far can we go?* and to Caritas Australia for their close involvement.

We are here because of our concern to promote the wellbeing of the poorest people on our earth, recognising that the UN Millennium Development Goals represent one of humankind's brightest hopes at this stage in history. I see them as a marvellous godsend, fleshing out the Gospel plea to feed the hungry and care for the afflicted.

I particularly thank our two guest speakers.

Cardinal Cassidy is well known to us from our TV sets, and has played a leading role not only in the diplomatic corps of the Vatican, but also in ecumenical and inter-faith affairs. It is wonderful to have him back in Australia, and I wish to give you my heart-felt thanks for flying down from Newcastle to launch this document so thoughtfully.

I also thank Mr Simon McKeon for his contribution. He has long been keenly aware of the human tragedy of hunger and gross poverty. As a prominent member of the business community, he has been involved with efforts to link businesses and community groups to tackle specific social problems. It is undoubtedly true that if we

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## **Catholic Social Services Victoria**

383 Albert St. East Melbourne

Ph: 9287 5566 Fax: 9287 5567

Web: www.css.org.au

E-mail: office@css.org.au

*If you wish to be placed on the mailing list please contact:*

## **Catholic Social Services Victoria**

P O Box 146 East Melbourne 8002

## **Episcopal Vicar for Social Welfare:**

Very Rev Fr Kevin Mogg

## **CSSV Council Members:**

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Fr Kevin Mogg – Episcopal Vicar – Social Welfare

Mr Patrick Gallagher – Executive Director

Ms Anne Tuohey – Policy & Advocacy Manager

Fr Bruce Duncan CSsR – Consultant

Ms Margaret Casey – Office Administrator

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## **Editorial Committee:**

Bruce Duncan

Margaret Casey

## **Editorial Inquiries:**

Margaret Casey

## **Design & Layout:**

Susie Berry

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are to make major inroads into global poverty, we must look to the business community for their energy, ideas and expertise. How might we pursue this?

Those with a development background will be familiar with the message of this little booklet, *Ending Hunger*. I wrote it out of a sense of acute frustration that many Australians seem not to have heard that *there is no economic need for anyone in the world to be hungry*. Yet this claim is surely astonishing good news. It is the first time in history we have been able to say it.

This message is not just my view, or that of some wild enthusiasts. It is the view of leading development economists. It is the thinking behind the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, which summarise how to move modestly but firmly in this direction.

The message has not yet been taken up strongly in Australia. In contrast to Britain and some of the European countries, there has been no strong movement in public opinion urging Australia to play its full role in this global effort to reduce hunger and the most extreme forms of poverty.

This needs to change. This campaign to Make Poverty History aims precisely to raise public awareness that not only can we do this, but with our current phenomenal wealth, the advanced countries can provide the needed funding relatively easily. The project is not utopian or hopeless. It is do-able in our lifetimes, as Jeffrey Sachs argues in his wonderful book, *The End of Poverty*.

Various writers have compared the eradication of hunger today with the abolition of slavery in the nineteenth century. Both projects represent a giant leap of the moral consciousness of humankind.

And this is the point we need to keep highlighting: the challenge for us is primarily a moral one, not an economic one. If we have the political and moral will to abolish hunger, then the economists can show us how to do it.

Throughout history, many people considered slavery unfortunate but inevitable. Many business people and writers defended it on economic grounds. But the issue became for a great many people primarily a moral one.

The same is true today of widespread hunger and the most severe poverty in developing countries. Yet shifting a mere five per cent of current world military spending would provide the funds needed immediately to double aid and implement the Millennium Development Goals. It is time to end this sheer madness in the way we misallocate resources.

Most Australians would go to great lengths to save the life of another human being, especially that of a child. Yet we in the developed countries have the opportunity to save the lives of an astonishing 30 million children in the next ten years, and to lift hundreds of millions of people out of the most severe poverty and hunger.

The generous response to the Asian tsunami demonstrates that there is immense good will in the Australian population towards others in great suffering.

The challenge for us is to stimulate the public conversation about these issues, invite business people and all those with special expertise to help find practical solutions, and to encourage our political institutions to support the UN Millennium Goals robustly and generously.

Once there was little we could do to help impoverished peoples far away. But today when we see hungry or distressed people on our TV sets, we know that we can help them. It is possible to eradicate hunger and the most severe poverty just about everywhere, if we really want to.

I think it was St Basil in the fourth century who said: 'Feed the man you see dying of hunger, for if you have not fed him, you have killed him.' Let us bestir ourselves and our nation to make severe poverty, and hunger, history. ❖



Photo courtesy of M Fyfe Caritas Australia

# Historic Opportunity to Reduce World Hunger and Severest Poverty

Cardinal Edward Cassidy has called on Australians to support more strongly the UN Millennium Development Goals to halve by 2015 the number of people suffering hunger and the most severe poverty, especially in Africa.

He said that the initiatives of British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, along with those of musicians, Bono and Bob Geldorf, indicate that developed countries can do much more to help lift impoverished people out of hunger.

Cardinal Cassidy was speaking at the national launch of *Ending Hunger – how far can we go?* by Fr Bruce Duncan CSsR. This publication of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council was produced in cooperation with Caritas Australia as part of their contribution to the Make Poverty History campaign. More than 70 people attended the launch at the Melbourne Town Hall on 15 June.

Ms Vicki Walker, a member of the Melbourne Commission for Justice, Development and Peace, made the acknowledgement of the original indigenous people of Australia. Mr John Ferguson, executive officer of the ACSJC, was MC for the launch, and Bishop Jeremiah Coffey of Sale, previous ACSJC chair, introduced the Cardinal.

Cardinal Cassidy has recently returned to live in Newcastle after many years in the Vatican diplomatic corps. In 1988 he was appointed Substitute Secretary of State in the Vatican for a year, and until recently was president of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity and also president of the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews.

He has a deep concern about the problems of developing countries, as his postings included India, El Salvador, Argentina, Bangladesh, Burma and South Africa. He quoted the Nobel Prize-winning economist, Amartya Sen: 'What makes this widespread hunger even more of a tragedy is the way we have come to accept and tolerate it as part of the modern world, as if it is essentially unpreventable.'

The Cardinal continued that the obligation to eradicate poverty arose from 'the very essence of humanity. There is an ethical or moral responsibility involved'. 'Do we see the hungry and poverty-stricken African, for example, as just one of "the others" for whom we have no moral responsibility, or do we see that person rather as a "brother or sister" in need? For me this is at the heart of the problem.'

'This understanding of the neighbour as a brother or sister is not alien to our own Australian history and experience. This nation was built upon a deep sense of social justice and the need to help the "underdog". The extraordinarily generous response of the Australian people to the tragic consequences of the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami is surely to be explained by such an understanding.'

He noted that Australia's official development assistance was surprisingly modest for a country enjoying a long economic boom, at only 0.28 per cent of gross national income. This is a long way short of the UN target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income. With other developed countries, Australia needs to double its overseas aid if we are to make serious reductions in the numbers of people suffering from hunger and the most desperate poverty.

Responding to Cardinal Cassidy was Mr Simon McKeon, executive chair of the Macquarie Bank's Melbourne office. Mr McKeon is involved with a number of community projects, and sits on the boards of World Vision Australia and MS Research Australia. He is the inaugural chair of Melbourne Cares, an organisation linking business and community groups to address social issues.

Mr McKeon argued strongly in support of the Millennium Development Goals, noting that the tide of public opinion seemed to be turning in favour of a global effort to eradicate hunger, as evidenced by the recent remission of debts of some of the poorest countries and the G8 efforts to increase international aid substantially.

However he said that public opinion in Australia was only slowly becoming aware of the great moral issue of hunger overseas. He thought more informed conversation about the eradication of hunger was a precondition for action by governments. He considered the current campaign to eliminate hunger comparable in historical significance to the abolition of slavery in the 19th century.

In his view, the business world was not yet playing its full part in responding to development issues, but he believed it could, and that in time it would.

The national director of Caritas Australia, Mr Jack de Groot, linked the launch with the Make Poverty History campaign. He also explained the white wrist bands as demonstrating people's support to Make Poverty History. ❖



Photos courtesy of M Fyfe Caritas Australia

## Cardinal O'Brien's Address to "MAKE Poverty History" Rally

# "LISTEN TO THE VOICE OF YOUR PEOPLE!"



EDINBURGH, Scotland, JULY 3, 2005 (Zenit.org).- This is the address that Cardinal Keith O'Brien, archbishop of Saint Andrews and Edinburgh, gave to the "Make Poverty History" rally in Edinburgh on Saturday.

The rally was organized to demand trade justice, debt cancellation, and more and better aid for the world's poorest countries from the heads of state [meeting] in Gleneagles for the G-8 summit ... [6-8 July].

In being here today, we recognize our solidarity with the poor of the world.

Yesterday, I received from Pope Benedict XVI a message in which he asked me to give his greetings to you all today, "united by your concern for the welfare of millions of our brothers and sisters afflicted by extreme poverty."

He continues: "People from the world's richest countries should be prepared to accept the burden of debt reduction for heavily indebted poor countries, and should urge their leaders to fulfill the pledges made to reduce world poverty, especially in Africa, by the year 2015."

Pope Benedict XVI ends by expressing his "ardent hope that the scourge of global poverty may one day be consigned to history."

We are here today because we are scandalized by the needless suffering that poverty causes. To be passive or indifferent in the knowledge that one

child dies needlessly every three seconds is to be an accomplice in barbarity!

Our cry today is the legitimate voice of the people, to our elected leaders, on behalf of millions who have no voice. I summarize our cries to the G8 leaders:

(1) "Listen to the voice of your people!"

We ask you to listen to the voices of the millions of people in your countries and across the world who say now is the time to end poverty. For, if poverty does not end now, when will it end? If we do not play our part in ending poverty at this time, then who will accomplish that goal?

(2) "Be generous and just!"

We also say to our G8 leaders: "Be generous and just!" The cost of delay, of meanness, of the lack of political will, is being paid in the needless deaths of 30,000 children each day. The poor do not seek charity but justice. Canceling debt, increasing our aid, making the rules of trade fair are not acts of charity: they are long overdue acts of justice. We demand generosity and justice in our giving

and in our politics.

(3) "Be aware of what your people are doing!"

We ask our leaders to be proud of their people today. As these white bands encircle our wrists, so we, through our gathering today, join together with people across the world.

Our presence here today, our demand for justice, echo those great historic campaigns to end slavery and, more recently, apartheid.

Our presence here today shows that we are:

Aware of the poverty suffered by others;

Aware of the immorality of allowing that suffering to take place;

Aware of our rights as citizens to be heard;

Aware of the men, women and children dying as we speak;

Aware that our solidarity gives us strength;

Aware that our leaders may turn a deaf ear but Almighty God hears our cry;

And aware that only together can we: Make Poverty History. ❖

# Victorian Government's Social Justice Statements

by Patrick Gallagher

Since the last edition of *Micah* the Victorian Government has launched two significant documents. The first, released in March 2005, is titled 'Challenges in Addressing Disadvantage in Victoria-reporting on progress identifying future directions'. To quote from the joint message from the Premier and the Deputy Premier this report seeks to "provide a picture of the nature and extent of disadvantage in Victoria, identifies areas where Victorians aren't getting a fair go and makes the case for reducing disadvantage in the interests of all Victorians".

It is acknowledged in the report that despite the improved circumstances for many citizens there still exists a reality of not all Victorians benefiting from the State's strong economic performance.

The Government has listed five key ways of addressing the disadvantage in Victoria:

1. reducing barriers to opportunity
2. ensuring that universal services provide equal opportunity for all
3. strengthening assistance to disadvantaged groups
4. providing targeted support to the highest risk areas
5. involving communities in decisions affecting their lives and making it easier to work with Government.

In mapping out its future directions the Government's report details six reasons for seeking to address disadvantage:

- fairness is a fundamental Victorian value
- people living in hardship and deprivation is unacceptable within a civil society
- Victoria needs to be a united society
- Victorians must have a chance to develop valuable skills
- Victoria needs strong and thriving communities

- reducing disadvantage will free up community resources.

The Government notes in this report that it has learnt a number of lessons, which will obviously influence its approaches:

**Lesson 1:** restoring and improving access to high quality, universally provided services in health, education and community safety is the basis of a strong and prosperous society

**Lesson 2:** there is a need for universally provided services to respond to the specific circumstances of groups or places that experience disadvantage

**Lesson 3:** targeted support is needed to ensure equality of opportunity for some groups and places

**Lesson 4:** better and more lasting outcomes are achieved when people in local communities have more power to make decisions determining their own futures.

Subsequent to the release of the 'Challenges in Addressing Disadvantage in Victoria-reporting on progress identifying future directions' report, the State Government then released, in April 2005, a report titled 'A Fairer Victoria - Creating opportunity and addressing disadvantage'. This document which preceded the 2005 state budget outlines the strategic approach which the Government intends to pursue in addressing disadvantage in the Victorian community.

In total the Government has identified 14 broad strategies spread across the following five areas:

- Access to universal services (4 strategies)
- Reducing barriers to opportunity (4 strategies)
- Support for disadvantaged groups (3 strategies)
- Support for disadvantaged places (1 strategy)
- Making it easier to work with government (2 strategies).

The report outlines, in greater detail, the specific actions to be taken and funding allocations to be made by the Government in support of these initiatives.

Catholic Social Services Victoria (CSSV) is pleased to note that both these recent government reports send a strong signal that the Bracks Government intends fairness to be a hallmark of this term of office and for future periods. With the obvious disadvantage that is confronted on a daily basis by CSSV member agencies, this very formal and public government acknowledgement is a step to be welcomed and encouraged.

CSSV also acknowledges the Government's attitude that the actions it is seeking to take will require a long-term approach over a 5-10 year period. This is a realistic assessment of the time frames necessary to achieve effective change in the tackling of disadvantage.

CSSV is encouraging the Government to work closely with Church and other community groups in developing innovative approaches to addressing disadvantage in Victoria. Church and community groups have sound and practical appreciations of what is happening 'on the ground' and the most effective means by which problems can be addressed.

CSSV is supportive of the Government's preparedness to recognise and seek to address the presence of disadvantage in our community. However CSSV stresses the importance of the Government and the community being able to transparently monitor if the strategies to address disadvantage are effective with appropriate, and accepted, performance measures being put in place from the outset.

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## 2005 State Budget

Overall, the 2005 State Budget heralds an intention to underpin the Government's fairness vision with some sound foundations. In this sense the Budget enables real action to address disadvantage to be initiated.

The May 2005 State budget reflects new investment in areas such as hospitals and schools which require re-building, with public transport and some environmental areas also being addressed. This is an important step in re-building social and physical infrastructure in the State. Actions such as the improvement to public

transport are real and tangible steps to helping the disadvantaged to overcome their difficult circumstances. Despite the increases in funding however there are, and will continue to be, areas of unmet high need.

In this regard the Government must accept that there will be expectations that next year's election budget will continue its vision of a fairer Victoria. This will include more spending on services which have significant unmet need at the present time (including mental health, disability services, kindergartens, migrant and refugee services).

CSSV is however concerned about the State's continuing reliance on gambling revenue and its regressive taxation effect thereby often adversely contributing to people's incapacity to overcome disadvantage.

CSSV notes the Government's adoption of hypothecated taxes, in response to community perceptions about important areas like road safety. Consistent with the Government's social justice reforms, CSSV urge that there ought to be testing of the public's willingness to accept other taxes if linked to a direct and apparent community benefit. ❖

## Travellers Aid Society of Victoria

The Travellers Aid Society of Victoria (TASV) was formed in 1916 to offer support and protection for women and girls arriving in Melbourne from overseas, interstate and country Victoria.

In the beginning, predominantly deserted wives of soldiers and their children benefited from Travellers Aid. The Society worked tirelessly and successfully on applications for War Gratuity Pensions. Accommodation was found for many women. Regular and ongoing follow-ups were part of the service. These involved correspondence, hospital visits, etc., ensuring the good health and happiness of the women and their children. Women arriving by steamer and working couples were assisted to find employment.

The disintegration of families and increase in child runaways, as a result of the Depression, demonstrated TASV's adaptability to acknowledge contemporary problems. In addition, the moral panic and problems presented by the Second World War and the post-war economic situation, showed TASV's important role in assisting those affected by the housing shortage, migrants, service personnel, wives of soldiers and women taking advantage of the employment boom

in the manufacturing industry.

As Australia's economic and social position changed after the 1960s, TASV transformed itself in meeting the new needs and challenges of society. As well as its traditional role in supporting non-commercial travellers and people with employment and accommodation needs, TASV's role in establishing a disability service has set a precedent in promoting the empowerment of disabled users, rather than creating dependency.

Today we celebrate the remarkable achievements and versatility of TASV, adapting to and meeting new challenges and needs of the community. TASV is poised to expand its services to include provision on Flinders Street Station for a Mobility Centre and one-stop-shop.

It is planned to hire out wheelchairs, motor scooters and other mobility aids for people visiting Melbourne, enabling accessibility for those with mobility problems for occasions such as ANZAC Day, Moomba, football matches, the Australian National Tennis Championships, the Grand Prix and many other events in Melbourne.

*TASV services not replicated by any other community agencies*

Travellers Aid Centre at Spencer

Street Railway Station/Southern Cross Railway Station is a vital support for travellers with special needs, including older travellers, families with young children and people with disabilities, assisting people on and off trains and around the station. Hours of operation: 7.30am – 7.30pm Monday to Friday and 7.30am – 11.30am Saturday and Sunday.

Travellers Aid Disability Services (TADAS) assists people with disabilities to achieve maximum independence and access the CBD. Hours of operation: 9.00am – 5.00pm Monday to Friday, 11.00am – 4.00pm Saturday and Sunday.

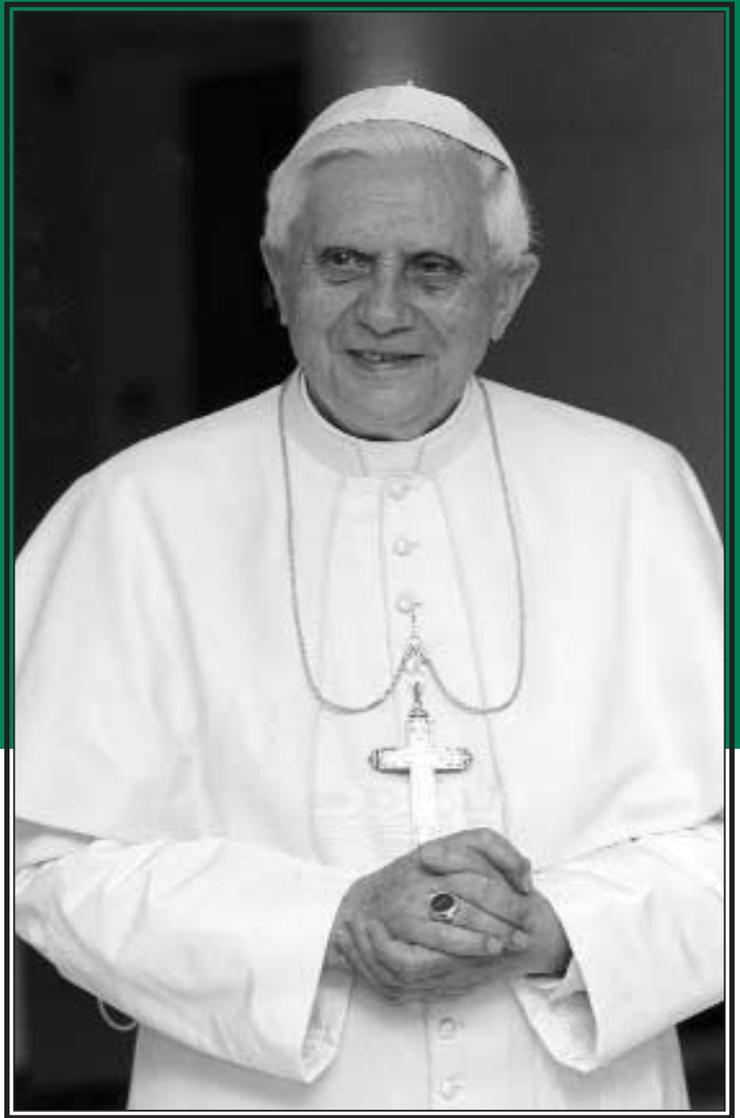
Homeward Bound, TASV's crisis emergency welfare program, reunites people in crisis with family, friends and other supports. Hours of operation: 8.30am – 2.00pm Monday to Friday.

TASV's City Centre Café, Civic Amenities and Services, at the corner of Swanston and Bourke Streets, is a haven in the heart of the city for tourists, locals, visitors young and old and those in need. Our internet and email facilities are available for use, with free training for senior citizens. Hours of operation: 9.00am – 5.00pm Monday to Friday. ❖

# The New *Compendium of Social Doctrine:* what does it offer our welfare services?

by Bruce Duncan CSsR

The new Vatican *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* highlights the urgency for people to contribute more decisively to the task of social transformation. This comprehensive treatment covers many areas of urgent social concern, but this article focuses on issues around social welfare provision.



Concerned that few people seemed to realise how central to the work of the Church was its involvement with social issues, including health, welfare, education and social services, Pope John Paul II directed that a type of catechism of Church social teaching be prepared.

It took longer than expected and was only published in late 2004 under the title, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*. Its 525 pages are not an easy read as it summarises difficult and sometimes contentious debates. But its massive 166-page index makes it a valuable resource for quickly identifying official Church views on various issues.

The book is not called a catechism, since much of the material in its pages relies on judgments about social and political matters that do not necessarily involve one's faith. It wants to leave room for informed debate about how the principles of social justice should be applied in different circumstances.

The very title, *Compendium*, accurately reflects the fact that the book gathers many of the most significant statements made by recent popes and Vatican officials over more than a century (since Leo XIII's 1891 landmark social encyclical *Rerum Novarum*) and synthesises them into various themes. Chapters are devoted

to family life, human work, economic life, the political community, international issues, the environment and peace.

Given the astonishing volume of material to be summarised, especially of Pope John Paul II and Vatican agencies, writing the *Compendium* was a demanding task given to the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. The text clearly indicates where the citations are from, but knits them together into a continuous literary structure.

## Vetted by Ratzinger's Congregation

This draft was reviewed thoroughly

• Bruce Duncan CSsR is a consultant with Catholic Social Services Victoria, and coordinates the social justice studies program at Yarra Theological Union in Box Hill. Please note that the *Compendium* has lavishly italicised many phrases and sentences, and this article retains the italics when quoting such passages.

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by Cardinal Ratzinger's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, so the final product indicates the social views that Pope Benedict XVI is likely to pursue.

The *Compendium* warns, however, that it contains Church statements that vary in their authoritative weight, and hence readers must judge this accordingly. Yet while allowing room for change and development in its social teaching, the Church commends the text seriously to people's consciences, insisting that the underlying principles and criteria of judgement are part of its formal doctrinal teaching, not optional extras.

The *Compendium* strongly affirms everyone contributing to social wellbeing in whatever way, stressing that this is living out the Gospel in practice. Indeed *'The Church's social doctrine is an integral part of her evangelizing ministry.* Nothing that concerns the community of men and women – situations and problems regarding justice, freedom, development, relations between peoples, peace – is foreign to evangelization...'

(par. 66). 'This is not a marginal interest or activity, or one that is tacked on to the Church's mission, rather it is at the very heart of the Church's ministry of service...'

(par. 67).

However, 'the Church does not attempt to structure or organize society, but to appeal to, guide and form consciences.' Still, the Church must be prepared to denounce injustice and violence, and defend human rights, especially those of the poor, the least and the weak (par. 81).

### Social transformation and lay people

The task of social transformation to



prefigure the 'new heavens and the new earth' of God's promise belongs primarily to lay people in the secular conditions of their lives (par. 82-83).

The social teaching begins with the dignity of the human person, made in the image of God. Various social principles flow out of this:

- the need to ensure that every person has the resources to live a decent life (solidarity)
- the organisation of society to provide the conditions for a just social order through the equitable distribution of goods and services (the common good)
- the right to property, in which private ownership is justified in terms of its contribution to the good of all
- the widespread dispersion of power and responsibility through society (subsidiarity)

so that people can exercise their right to participate appropriately in decision-making that concerns them.

Some may be surprised to read in the *Compendium*: *'The Church's social doctrine requires that ownership of goods be equally accessible to all, so that all may become, at least in some measure, owners...'* (par. 176). This is part of the Church's long-standing emphasis on the widest possible distribution of ownership in society, though the above quotation should presumably be translated as 'equitable distribution' rather than 'equally distributed' since an absolute equality of wealth, as demanded by extreme forms of socialism, has never been part of the Church's teaching.

### Against the welfare State?

In the context of current debates over the future of the welfare State, what has the *Compendium* to offer? Some of the US neo-conservatives, such as Michael Novak, have argued that Catholic social teaching requires a minimal role for the State and demands a scaling back of the welfare State. They quote Pope John Paul II's criticisms of the 'Social Assistance State' in his 1991 encyclical, *Centesimus Annus*, in support of their views.

Indeed, the *Compendium*, too, states that the principle of subsidiarity 'is opposed to certain forms of centralization, bureaucratization and welfare assistance, and to the unjustified and excessive presence of the State in public mechanisms.' As Pope John Paul said in *Centesimus Annus*: "By intervening directly and depriving society of its responsibility, the Social Assistance State leads to a loss of human energies and an inordinate increase of public agencies, which are dominated more by bureaucratic

ways of thinking than by concern for serving their clients, and which are accompanied by an enormous increase in spending.”

The *Compendium* calls for the development of intermediate organisations, and ‘bringing about bureaucratic and administrative decentralization; striking a balance between the public and private spheres, with the resulting recognition of the social function of the private sphere...’ (par. 187).

The *Compendium* recognises that the State must step in ‘to supply certain functions’, as when it must stimulate the economy or rectify serious imbalances or injustices. But this intervention ‘must not continue any longer than is absolutely necessary, since justification for such intervention is found only in the *exceptional nature* of the situation.’ Nevertheless, the demands of the common good are the decisive criteria for judging the appropriate role of the State (par. 188).

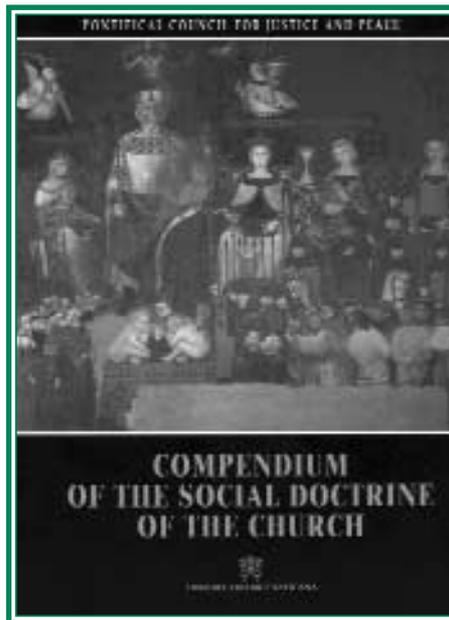
As stated in this passage, this view of the role of the State is quite abstract. The *Compendium* can be understood as criticising the size and scope of the welfare State as it has developed in some European countries, far beyond what we have known in Australia. But the *Compendium* does not acknowledge the great variety of arrangements in welfare States, or the extent to which western democratic governments are deeply enmeshed in the operation of their economies.

At least in this section, the text somewhat understates the customary role of the State in planning social and industrial development, securing an equitable environment for business, providing services in health care, education and welfare, as well as supplying physical infrastructure along with regulatory and legal regimes, and ensuring the redistribution of resources to offer a reasonable equality of opportunity for all citizens.

Yet later on the *Compendium* does recognise the need for the intervention of the welfare State in many ways. It strongly supports a family wage high enough to acquire some property and economic security. And if necessary, it

calls for various forms of social provision, such as ‘family subsidies and other contributions for dependent family members, and also remuneration for the domestic work done in the home by one of the parents’ (par. 250). It goes so far as to call for ‘economic compensation’ for housekeeping and family care (par. 251).

It also requires State intervention to reduce unemployment, ‘a real social disaster’, especially for younger generations. “*Full employment*” therefore remains a mandatory objective for every economic system oriented towards



justice and the common good.” (par. 288). ‘The duty of the State does not consist so much in directly guaranteeing the right to work of every citizen, making the whole of economic life very rigid and restricting individual free initiative, as much as in the duty to “sustain business activities by creating conditions which will ensure job opportunities, by stimulating those activities where they are lacking or by supporting them in moments of crisis”’ (par. 291).

The ‘*presence of women in the workplace must also be guaranteed*’, especially by professional formation (par. 295). The document rejects child labour as ‘a kind of violence’ amounting in some countries to ‘*veritable slavery*.’ (par. 296) Concerning international migration, the *Compendium* notes that ‘Immigrants

are to be received as persons and helped, together with their families, to become a part of societal life. In this context, *the right of reuniting families should be respected and promoted*’ (par. 298).

Hence the *Compendium* supports State subsidies ‘for the subsistence of unemployed workers and their families; the right to a pension and to insurance for old age, sickness, and in case of work-related accidents; the right to social security connected with maternity; the right to assemble and form associations’ (par. 301).

It insists that a just wage is not simply a contractual matter, since ‘natural justice precedes and is above the freedom of the contract’ (par. 302). Social justice requires an equitable distribution of income in accord with the dignity of workers, but redistribution of income must also take account of general conditions, and ‘look at merit as well as the need of each citizen’ (par. 303).

Given the great changes in the organisation of work involved with globalisation, the *Compendium* recognises the need ‘to update the norms and systems of social security that have traditionally protected workers and guaranteed their fundamental rights’ (par. 309). The State must also guarantee ‘systems of social insurance and protection that are designed above all to protect the weakest members of society.’ ‘In the redistribution of resources, public spending must observe the principles of solidarity, equality and making use of talents. It must also pay greater attention to families, designating an adequate amount of resources for this purpose’ (par. 355).

The *Compendium* certainly recognises ‘the market as an *irreplaceable instrument for regulating... the economic system*’ but insists it meet certain ‘*ethical objectives*’, without which it would degenerate into “an ‘*idolatry*’ of the market”’ (par. 349).

While the State must favour the free exercise of economic activity, ‘It must also be inspired by the principle of solidarity and establish limits for the autonomy of the parties in order to defend

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However, the Church calls for an ethical framework around State activities, stressing the need to redistribute goods and services more equitably, particularly to promote greater equality of opportunity, but at the same time encouraging people to take responsibility and participate more actively in society. Above all, the Church urges all people of good will to give priority to the needs of the poorest people, and those in special need. ❖

*those who are weaker.* State intervention in the economy must be 'commensurate with society's real needs... In addition to the tasks of harmonizing and guiding development, in exceptional circumstances the State can also exercise a *substitute function*' (par. 351).

Thus the *Compendium* strongly supports the welfare State in principle, and rejects the neoconservative calls for a minimalist State.



### Conclusion

Debates over the scope of the welfare State cannot be resolved in the abstract, as so much depends on the economic circumstances, history and culture in various societies. It is up to people in different countries to determine how best to respond to local needs with the resources available. As those who work in social services know so well, the provision of services is immensely complex and requires continual careful evaluation and adjustment better to meet the needs of people.



Photos courtesy of M Fyfe Caritas Australia



## Diary Dates-2005

- CSSV Council Meeting dates for the remainder of 2005:

- July	29
- August	19
- September	16
- October	21
- November	18
- December	16

- A members' forum, originally to be conducted in October 2005 to discuss issues pertinent to the next Victorian State Election, is now being planned for Wednesday 9 November 2005, due to other events occurring around this time. Details will be made available once plans have been further advanced.

## Project Updates

Current project work being undertaken by CSSV includes:

- **Housing**

On Thursday 2 June 2005 CSSV conducted an evening seminar for parish priests interested in the possible development of surplus parish property for social housing purposes. The seminar include a presentation by John Timmer from Melbourne Affordable Housing and advice from the Archdiocese Property Office each addressing how potential projects could be advanced.

- **Aged Care and Homelessness**

Review work of this report is continuing although it is taking longer than expected due to other competing interests within the CSSV Secretariat office. However it is expected that the final report will be available for release in late July 2005.

- **Disability Services**

CSSV in collaboration with Australian Catholic University and other partners have applied for an Australian Research Council grant to enable the next phase of the research titled "Pathways into residential aged care for older people with an intellectual disability" to be undertaken. Advice on the status of this application is not expected till late in 2005.

- **Poverty**

Review work of the final draft report is presently underway with plans soon to be developed for the launch of this report. It is hoped that a Government Minister will be able to formally launch this report later in 2005.

- **Community Building**

Work on a summary report of the Northern Areas Project is commencing with the Central Steering Group continuing to meet on a regular basis to consider and comment upon the draft document.

- **Child protection**

On Wednesday 18 May 2005 CSSV arranged and hosted a workshop for representatives from member agencies concerning current State Government initiatives. These include working toward amalgamating the Community Services Act and the Young Persons Act.

## Recent Submissions

- In May 2005 CSSV lodged a submission with the Senate Select Inquiry into Mental Health and made the following recommendations:

### *Recommendation 6.1*

As the stigma associated with mental illness often leads to un-

necessary alienation and segregation of those with mental illness, every effort be made by State and Federal Governments and relevant agencies to dispel the stigma with practical and effective strategies.

### *Recommendation 6.2*

Early identification and greater community awareness and understanding of mental illness be a strong focus of any ongoing or new initiatives.

### *Recommendation 6.3*

Improved training in mental health awareness be provided to general staff in the community sector as well as an adequate level of access to mental health specialists for referrals as required.

### *Recommendation 6.4*

Capacity for more coordinated partnerships between community based agencies, community health services, General Practitioners and specialist mental health services be enhanced.

### *Recommendation 6.5*

Availability and access to appropriate housing linked to relevant types and levels of support be increased.

### *Recommendation 6.6*

Broader access to mental health servicing in rural and remote areas be developed to ensure a better coverage and capacity to meet need in these areas.

### *Recommendation 6.7*

The level of outreach services particularly for young people better reflect the actual demand level in the community.

# MAKE POVERTY HISTORY CAMPAIGN

*Catholic Social Services Victoria, Caritas Australia, Melbourne Catholic Commission for Justice, Development & Peace and the Archbishop's Office for Evangelisation are working together to raise awareness of the Make Poverty History campaign in the Melbourne Archdiocese.*



As a means to achieving that, copies of *Ending Hunger: how far can we go?* are available from Catholic Social Services Victoria for \$6.60 per copy including GST.

Phone (03) 9287 5566, fax (03) 9287 5567, email [office@css.org.au](mailto:office@css.org.au).

White wristbands have been part of the worldwide campaign to **Make Poverty History** and they are available from Caritas Australia Melbourne office. The wristbands are available in large, medium and small at no charge – however, a donation to Caritas Australia would assist in the promotion of the **Make Poverty History** campaign.

Phone (03) 9926 5786, fax (03) 9926 5792 or email [margaretf@caritas.org.au](mailto:margaretf@caritas.org.au).



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*Micah July 2005*

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