

# *Mercy Advocacy*

*'A faith which does not draw us into solidarity is a faith which is dead. It is a faith without Christ, a faith without God, a faith without brothers and sisters.'*

*- Pope Francis*



*Seeding the Future with Others*

*August 2015*



**Stand with us:**

**Asylum seekers and refugees**

**People who are homeless**

**The First Peoples**

**All who struggle for justice, freedom  
and peace - grandmothers, doctors, teachers,  
social workers.....**



## The four-fold Benedictine blessing:

*May God bless us all with a restless discomfort  
At easy answers, half-truths and superficial relationships  
So that we may live deep within our heart      Amen*

### Easy answers and half truths:

*Saving lives at sea*

### Unacknowledged realities

- *sending back asylum seekers to danger in their own country*
- *passing the buck to poorer developing countries*
- *condemning to hopelessness in Nauru/Manus/mainland detention centres leading to abuse or suicide*

(Ms A) had been brought to Australia from Nauru for medical care. She was sexually assaulted in Nauru and is on record as reporting this to the Moss Review. She says asylum seekers were forcibly removed from Wickham Point (N.T.) in the dead of the night Wednesday 24 June and taken to a prison, where they were held for many hours, before being taken to the airport. The asylum seekers were strip-searched by Serco guards at the prison and forced to shower naked in front of guards. She says that forty-eight asylum seekers were sent to Nauru, including nine children, three of whom were babies.



*Grandmothers Against Detention of Refugee Children rally  
Photo by Justin McManus*



## ACTION:

A suggestion from *Julian Burnside QC*

- Encourage any priest you know to speak out on the issue on Refugee & Migrant Sunday (30 August) to say unequivocally that the current treatment of asylum seekers is not acceptable.



*May God bless us with anger\**  
*At injustice, oppression and exploitation of people*  
*So that we may work for justice, freedom and peace*  
*Amen*

In our society if institutions or people with responsibility for others, particularly for children, do not report abuse, they are judged to be failing in their duty of care and protection. If such people working in detention centres speak out on such matters, under the Border Force Act they may be liable to imprisonment. The Government's insistence that 'proper channels' for reporting abuse exist and that the law will not be enforced against doctors is not acceptable. The law will stand and the existing channels of reporting have not led to the bringing to justice of those implicated in offences nor to the prevention of continuing abuses. As many, including the President of the AMA, *Professor Brian Owler*, have asked: why have such a law, if it is not to be enforced. He regards it as intimidatory.

*"It's a gag law,"* said psychologist *Nicholas O'Dwyer*.



*\* Hope has two daughters –  
anger and courage - St Augustine*

*"It seems to me it contradicts the Hippocratic Oath of medicos not to be able to report on the welfare of their patients. It's unbelievable in the 21st century."*



## **ACTION:**

Telephone /write/email ***Senator Glenn Lazarus*** to express your concern at the gagging of professionals and other detention staff under the Border Force Act;

Postal address: GPO Box 228  
Brisbane Qld 4001

Telephone: (07) 3001 8940

Fax: (07) 3001 8948.

Email: [Senator.Lazarus@aph.gov.au](mailto:Senator.Lazarus@aph.gov.au)



*May God bless us with tears  
For those who suffer pain, rejection, hunger and war  
So we may reach out our hands to comfort them and  
Turn their sorrow to joy            Amen*

On any day one in two hundred Australians are homeless -  
Homelessness Prevention Week 3-9 August

Officials in Western Australia are under fire for using a water spray system to try to stop homeless people from bedding down around Perth's Arts Centre.

*"We sleep here, we don't bother anyone but they've put the sprinklers here to get rid of us,"*

Said **Ted**, one of the people who sleep outside the centre and who says he has been battling homelessness for fifteen years.

The sprinkler system operating from the second storey of the arts centre has angered charities and people living on the street.



*Ted and the Water Spray System*



*"You wouldn't treat a dog like that, so I don't know why we're treating our fellow human beings like that,"*

St Vincent de Paul's WA chief executive, **Mark Fitzpatrick**, said.

*"It beggars belief."*

Salvos Lieutenant, **Kris Halliday**, speaking to 9 News said

*"Instead of moving the homeless on, we need to be moving them in TO HOMES."*



## **ACTION success:**

- Following pressure from charities and sixteen thousand online petition-signers in three days, a new conversation with a humane response to homeless people has begun
- The WA Department of Culture and Arts has turned off the controversial sprinkler system used to prevent homeless people bedding down in the inner city - because , (in their words), it "wasn't to specification". (Allegedly it was supposed to spray a mist!!)
- The WA Government is progressing a further ten thousand houses for the homeless, adding to its already completed twenty thousand between now and 2020.

*Read more:*

<http://www.watoday.com.au/wa-news/was-department-of-culture-and-arts-under-fire-for-turning-hoses-on-homeless-20150708-gi79wu.html#ixzz3gaPn2xe0>





*May God bless us with enough foolishness  
To believe that we can do what others claim cannot be done  
To bring justice and kindness to all our children and the poor  
Amen*



## We all Stand on Sacred Ground:

Learn, Respect & Celebrate

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We pray for understanding and appreciation of the history and cultures of the First Peoples of this land:

Give us courage to face the truth, compassion, strength to play our part in the healing and (in the learning) how to walk forward to a place of justice.

We pray to the Lord.

(Prayer of the Faithful - St. Stephen's Cathedral Mass for NAIDOC WEEK)





## **ACTION:**

It Stops with Me too

Support *Adam Goodes*, face of the logo, former Australian of the Year, AFL footballer who is currently enduring sustained on-ground booing for his stand against racism.

Via his supportive club; Sydney Swans

Postal: PO Box 173  
Paddington NSW 2021

Telephone: 1300 663 819

Email: [swansmembership@sydneyswans.com.au](mailto:swansmembership@sydneyswans.com.au)



*“You are the sowers of change. Here in Bolivia I have heard a phrase which I like: ‘process of change’. Change seen, not as something which will one day result from any one political decision or change in social structure. We know from painful experience that changes of structure which are not accompanied by a sincere conversion of mind and heart sooner or later end up in bureaucratization, corruption and failure. That is why I like the image of a ‘process’, where the drive to sow, to water seeds which others will see sprout, replaces the ambition to occupy every available position of power and to see immediate results. Each of us is just one part of a complex and differentiated whole, interacting in time: peoples who struggle to find meaning, a destiny, and to live with dignity, to ‘live well’.”*

**- Pope Francis**

speaking recently at the World Meeting of Popular Movements,  
Santa Cruz, Bolivia.





**Compiled by Genevieve Caffery and Dolores Creevey  
on behalf of the Members of the Reference Group**

