



CATHOLIC JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMISSION OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF BRISBANE

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A Fresh Start Needed after the Pandemic

Australia and the rest of the world cannot return to the way things were before the COVID-19 pandemic according to the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission of the Archdiocese of Brisbane.

“Many Australians may feel that we are coming out of the crisis and things can return to the way they were,” Commission Chair, Ms Maree Rose, said.

“However, that ignores the fact that the pandemic is still causing great distress in many parts of the world that are not as affluent as Australia is,” she said.

“It also ignores the many people who faced significant struggles before the pandemic struck and who will continue to struggle long after the worst of the threat has passed,” she added.

“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will continue to live with a lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality, unemployment and incarceration rates and the continuing tragedy of suicide,” Ms Rose said.

“The cries of Torres Strait Islander peoples for action to deal with rising waters inundating many of their islands will still go unheard,” she said.

“The thousands of people seeking asylum and international students who lost their jobs when the crisis began will continue to have no income and struggle to feed themselves and their children and keep a roof over their heads,” she said.

“Many refugees and people seeking asylum will continue to be detained by our Government in places like the Kangaroo Point Central Hotel and face on-going and very serious mental and physical health challenges,” she said.

“Many of our friends in Pacific countries and in various countries in Asia like the Philippines, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka will continue to ask when wealthy countries like Australia will listen to their pleas for serious action to save their lands from the worsening impacts of global warming,” Ms Rose said.

“Indigenous peoples in West Papua will continue to face imprisonment and even death at the hands of Australian trained and resourced members of the Indonesian police force and military for peacefully demonstrating and expressing their political views,” she said.

“There are many people with no power or wealth here in Australia and in other parts of the world who face enormous struggles and challenges in their efforts to live a dignified life and we cannot remain indifferent to their plight in a post-pandemic era,” she said.

“Early in his pontificate, Pope Francis spoke about the globalisation of indifference,” Ms Rose said.

“We, as Christians, need to stand with everyone who has no wealth and power and say that we cannot return to the way things were if it means more suffering and hardship for them,” she said.

“We are releasing this statement on the day when we in the Catholic tradition celebrate the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus,” she said.

“We are reminded on this day of the centrality of love in Jesus’ message,” she said.

“Love has the power to heal and transform society; it can make the world a new and better place,” she said.

“Let’s do whatever we can to shine the light of love into our damaged and hurting world; let’s make sure our community leaders hear the message that we want a fresh, life-giving start after the pandemic, especially for the forgotten and marginalised people of our country and our world,” she added.

For further information or comment, please contact Peter Arndt on 0409 265 476.