



September 2011



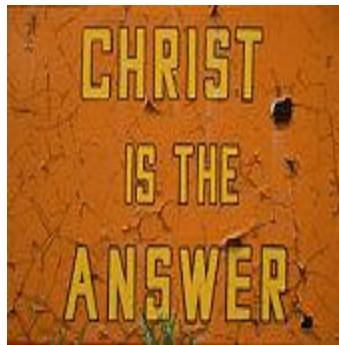
Parish Link

Observing the 40th Anniversary of “Justice in the World” (Synod of Bishops, 1971)

INTRODUCTION by Leela Ramdeen, Chair, CCSJ

In this edition of Parish Link, CCSJ shares with you extracts from the 12 page Synod of Bishops 1971 Document entitled: *Justice in the World*. On 30 November, 2011, the Church will mark the 40th Anniversary of the 1971 Synod of Bishops document, *Justice in the World* (http://www.osjspm.org/justice_in_the_world.aspx).

In keeping with Synod Resolution 3a (1), the Archdiocese will be observing *Respect for Life Week* from Saturday 12 November to Saturday 19 November, 2011. Please make a note of these dates in your diary. The week will open with the Sir Ellis Clarke Memorial Lecture at which an international speaker, Dr Victor Scheffers, Secretary-General, Commission for Justice and Peace, Catholic Bishops Conference of The Netherlands. The theme for the Lecture will be: “*Justice in the World’ and its relevance today.*”



Peter J. Henriot, S.J. said in 1972: “What makes this Synod document uniquely important...is its emphasis upon the theme of social sin...it has never before been so clearly explicated in an authoritative Roman document. Theologically, it helps us to understand more completely and adequately both 1) why the Church is socially involved and 2) how the Church is socially

involved.” Please read and note the important insights in *Justice in the World*. This will inform the conversation in our Archdiocese about our 2nd Pastoral Priority: *Revitalizing Catholic Culture and Identity*. Our faith in Jesus must inspire us to do more for justice and peace.



The 1971 document is a reflection on “the mission of the People of God to further justice in the world.” Like the Bishops, we should read the signs of the times and embrace the See, Judge, Act methodology.

The document comprises 5 sections: *Introduction, Justice and world Society, Gospel Message and Mission of Christ, Practice of Justice, and A Word of Hope*. It raises our awareness that to be fully Christian, we must not only proclaim the Good News and celebrate, but we must **act** for Justice; to build a just world. Thus while our personal conversion is important, we must strive to overcome e.g. structural sin/injustices and oppression. Love of God and love of neighbour are inextricably linked to justice for our neighbour whom we must see as another ‘self’.

It is helpful to read this document alongside Pope John XXIII’s series of human rights and duties outlined in his Encyclical, *Peace on Earth* (1963). The Bishops remind us in *Justice in the World* that “While the Church is bound to give witness to justice, she recognizes that anyone who ventures to speak to people about justice must first be just in their eyes. Hence we must undertake an examination of the modes of acting and of the possessions and life style found within the Church herself.” (40). The document calls for “Education in Justice” which is the responsibility of the **whole** Church (51). Liturgy and the Sacraments can serve justice education (58). Other issues included in the Bishops’ document include: The integrity of Creation (8, 11, 70); Ecumenism (61); and International Action: (64-66).

Extracts from Justice in the World: Synod of Bishops, 1971



Introduction: We have been able to perceive the serious injustices which are building around the human world a network of domination, oppression and abuses which stifle freedom and which keep the greater part of humanity from sharing in the building up and enjoyment of a more just and more loving world (#3).

Listening to the cry of those who suffer violence and are oppressed by unjust systems and structures, and hearing the appeal of a world that by its perversity contradicts the plan of its Creator, we have shared our awareness of the Church's vocation to be present in the heart of the world by proclaiming the Good News to the poor, freedom to the oppressed, and joy to the afflicted. The hopes and forces which are moving the world in its very foundations are not foreign to the dynamism of the Gospel, which through the power of the Holy Spirit frees people from personal sin and from its consequences in social life (#5). Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation (#6).





Justice and World Society : The world in which the Church lives and acts is held captive by a tremendous paradox. Never before have the forces working for bringing about a unified world society appeared so powerful and dynamic; they are rooted in the awareness of the full basic equality as well as of the human dignity of all. Since people are members of the same human family, they are indissolubly linked with one another in the one destiny of the whole world, in the responsibility for which they all share (#7).

The paradox lies in the fact that within this perspective of unity the forces of division and antagonism seem today to be increasing in strength. Ancient divisions between nations and empires, between races and classes, today possess new technological instruments of destruction. The arms race is a threat to our highest good, which is life; it makes poor peoples and individuals yet more miserable, while making richer those already powerful; it creates a continuous danger of conflagration, and in the case of nuclear arms, it threatens to destroy all life from the face of the earth. At the same time new divisions are being born to separate people from their neighbors. Unless combated and overcome by social and political action, the influence of the new industrial and technological order favors the concentration of wealth, power and decision-making in the hands of a small public or private controlling group. Economic injustice and lack of social participation keep people from attaining their basic human and civil rights (#9).





The right to development must be seen as a dynamic interpenetration of all those fundamental human rights upon which the aspirations of individuals and nations are based (#15).

Participation constitutes a right which is to be applied both in the economic and in the social and political field (#18).

To be especially lamented is the condition of so many millions of refugees, and of every group or people suffering persecution--sometimes in institutionalized form--for racial or ethnic origin or on tribal grounds. This persecution on tribal grounds can at times take on the characteristics of genocide (#22).

In many areas justice is seriously injured with regard to people who are suffering persecution for their faith, or who are in many ways being ceaselessly subjected by political parties and public authorities to an action of oppressive atheization, or who are deprived of religious liberty either by being kept from honoring God in public worship, or by being prevented from publicly teaching and spreading their faith, or by being prohibited from conducting their temporal affairs according to the principles of their religion (#23).





Justice is also being violated by forms of oppression, both old and new, springing from restriction of the rights of individuals. This is occurring both in the form of repression by the political power and of violence on the part of private reaction, and can reach the extreme of affecting the basic conditions of personal integrity. There are well known cases of torture, especially of political prisoners, who besides are frequently denied due process or who are subjected to arbitrary procedures in their trial. Nor can we pass over the prisoners of war who even after the Geneva Convention are being treated in an inhuman manner (#24).

The fight against legalized abortion and against the imposition of contraceptives and the pressures exerted against war are significant forms of defending the right to life (#25).

Furthermore, contemporary consciousness demands truth in the communications systems, including the right to the image offered by the media and the opportunity to correct its manipulation. It must be stressed that the right, especially that of children and the young, to education and to morally correct conditions of life and communications media is once again being threatened in our days. The activity of families in social life is rarely and insufficiently recognized by State institutions. Nor should we forget the growing number of persons who are often abandoned by their families and by the community: the old, orphans, the sick and all kinds of people who are rejected (#26). To restore the meaning of life by adherence to authentic values, the participation and witness of the rising generation of youth is as necessary as communication among peoples (#28).





Gospel Message and Mission of Christ : In the face of the present-day situation of the world, marked as it is by the grave sin of injustice, we recognize both our responsibility and our inability to overcome it by our own strength. Such a situation urges us to listen with a humble and open heart to the word of God, as he shows us new paths towards action in the cause of justice in the world (#29).

In the Old Testament God reveals himself to us as the liberator of the oppressed and the defender of the poor, demanding from people faith in him and justice towards one's neighbour. It is only in the observance of the duties of justice that God is truly recognized as the liberator of the oppressed (#30).

By his action and teaching Christ united in an indivisible way the relationship of people to God and the relationship of people to each other. Christ lived his life in the world as a total giving of himself to God for the salvation and liberation of people. In his preaching he proclaimed the fatherhood of God towards all people and the intervention of God's justice on behalf of the needy and the oppressed (Lk 6: 21-23). In this way he identified himself with his "least ones," as he stated: "As you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me" (Mt 25:40) (#31).





From the beginning the Church has lived and understood the Death and Resurrection of Christ as a call by God to conversion in the faith of Christ and in love of one another, perfected in mutual help even to the point of a voluntary sharing of material goods (#32).

Faith in Christ, the Son of God and the Redeemer, and love of neighbor constitute a fundamental theme of the writers of the New Testament. According to St. Paul, the whole of the Christian life is summed up in faith effecting that love and service of neighbor which involve the fulfilment of the demands of justice. The Christian lives under the interior law of liberty, which is a permanent call to us to turn away from self-sufficiency to confidence in God and from concern for self to a sincere love of neighbor. Thus takes place his genuine liberation and the gift of himself for the freedom of others (#33).

Our relationship to our neighbour is bound up with our relationship to God; our response to the love of God, saving us through Christ, is shown to be effective in his love and service of people. Christian love of neighbour and justice cannot be separated. For love implies an absolute demand for justice, namely a recognition of the dignity and rights of one's neighbour. Justice attains its inner fullness only in love. Because every person is truly a visible image of the invisible God and a sibling of Christ, the Christian finds in every person God himself and God's absolute demand for justice and love (#34). Unless the Christian message of love and justice shows its effectiveness through action in the cause of justice in the world, it will only with difficulty gain credibility with the people of our times (#35).





The Church has received from Christ the mission of preaching the Gospel message, which contains a call to people to turn away from sin to the love of the Father, universal kinship and a consequent demand for justice in the world. This is the reason why the Church has the right, indeed the duty, to proclaim justice on the social, national and international level, and to denounce instances of injustice, when the fundamental rights of people and their very salvation demand it. The Church, indeed, is not alone responsible for justice in the world; however, she has a proper and specific responsibility which is identified with her mission of giving witness before the world of the need for love and justice contained in the Gospel message, a witness to be carried out in Church institutions themselves and in the lives of Christians (#36).

The members of the Church, as members of society, have the same right and duty to promote the common good as do other citizens. Christians ought to fulfill their temporal obligations with fidelity and competence. They should act as a leaven in the world, in their family, professional, social, cultural and political life (#38).





While the Church is bound to give witness to justice, she recognizes that anyone who ventures to speak to people about justice must first be just in their eyes. Hence we must undertake an examination of the modes of acting and of the possessions and life style found within the Church herself (#40).

Within the Church rights must be preserved. No one should be deprived of his ordinary rights because he is associated with the Church in one way or another. Those who serve the Church by their labor, including priests and religious, should receive a sufficient livelihood and enjoy that social security which is customary in their region. Lay people should be given fair wages and a system for promotion. We reiterate the recommendations that lay people should exercise more important functions with regard to Church property and should share in its administration (#41).

also urge that women should have their own share of responsibility and participation in the community life of society and likewise of the Church (#42).





Although in general it is difficult to draw a line between what is needed for right use and what is demanded by prophetic witness, we must certainly keep firmly to this principle: our faith demands of us a certain sparingness in use, and the Church is obliged to live and administer its own goods in such a way that the Gospel is proclaimed to the poor. If instead the Church appears to be among the rich and the powerful of this world its credibility is diminished (#47).

Our examination of conscience now comes to the life style of all: bishops, priests, religious and lay people. In the case of needy peoples it must be asked whether belonging to the Church places people on a rich island within an ambient of poverty. In societies enjoying a higher level of consumer spending, it must be asked whether our life style exemplifies that sparingness with regard to consumption which we preach to others as necessary in order that so many millions of hungry people throughout the world may be fed (#48).

Christians' specific contribution to justice is the day-to-day life of individual believers acting like the leaven of the Gospel in their family, their school, their work and their social and civic life (#49).

...education demands a renewal of heart, a renewal based on the recognition of sin in its individual and social manifestations. It will also inculcate a truly and entirely human way of life in justice, love and simplicity. It will likewise awaken a critical sense, which will lead us to reflect on the society in which we live and on its values; it will make people ready to renounce these values when they cease to promote justice for all people. In the developing countries, the principal aim of this education for justice consists in an attempt to awaken consciences to a knowledge of the concrete situation and in a call to secure a total improvement; by these means the transformation of the world has already begun (#51).





Education for justice is imparted first in the family. We are well aware that not only Church institutions but also other schools, trade unions and political parties are collaborating in this (#54).

The basic principles whereby the influence of the Gospel has made itself felt in contemporary social life are to be found in the body of teaching set out in a gradual and timely way from the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* to the letter *Octogesima Adveniens*. As never before, the Church has, through the Second Vatican Council's constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, better understood the situation in the modern world, in which Christian works out their salvation by deeds of justice. *Pacem in Terris* gave us an authentic charter of human rights. In *Mater et Magistra* international justice begins to take first place; it finds more elaborate expression in *Populorum Progressio*, in the form of a true and suitable treatise on the right to development, and in *Octogesima Adveniens* is found a summary of guidelines for political action (#56).

Our mission demands that we should courageously denounce injustice, with charity, prudence and firmness, in sincere dialogue with all parties concerned. We know that our denunciations can secure assent to the extent that they are an expression of our lives and are manifested in continuous action (#57).





The liturgy, which we preside over and which is the heart of the Church's life, can greatly serve education for justice. For it is a thanksgiving to the Father in Christ, which through its communitarian form places before our eyes the bonds of our brotherhood and again and again reminds us of the Church's mission. The liturgy of the word, catechesis and the celebration of the sacraments have the power to help us to discover the teaching of the prophets, the Lord and the Apostles on the subject of justice. The preparation for baptism is the beginning of the formation of the Christian conscience. The practice of penance should emphasize the social dimension of sin and of the sacrament. Finally, the Eucharist forms the community and places it at the service of people (#58).

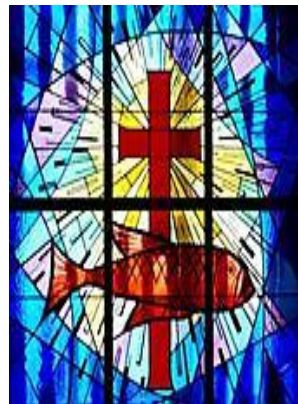
That the Church may really be the sign of that solidarity which the family of nations desires, it should show in its own life greater cooperation between the Churches of rich and poor regions through spiritual communion and division of human and material resources. The present generous arrangements for assistance between Churches could be made more effective by real coordination (Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and the Pontifical Council "Cor Unum"), through their overall view in regard to the common administration of the gifts of God, and through social solidarity, which would always encourage autonomy and responsibility on the part of the beneficiaries in the determination of criteria and the choice of concrete programs and their realization (#59)





Let recognition be given to the fact that international order is rooted in the inalienable rights and dignity of the human being. Let the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights be ratified by all Governments who have not yet adhered to it, and let it be fully observed by all (#64 (1)).

Let the United Nations -- which because of its unique purpose should promote participation by all nations -- and international organizations be supported insofar as they are the beginning of a system capable of restraining the armaments race, discouraging trade in weapons, securing disarmament and settling conflicts by peaceful methods of legal action, arbitration and international police action. It is absolutely necessary that international conflicts should not be settled by war, but that other methods better befitting human nature should be found. Let a strategy of non-violence be fostered also, and let conscientious objection be recognized and regulated by law in each nation (#65 (2)).





A word of Hope: The entire creation has been groaning till now in an act of giving birth, as it waits for the glory of the children of God to be revealed (cf. Rom 8:22). Let Christians therefore be convinced that they will yet find the fruits of their own nature and effort cleansed of all impurities in the new earth which God is now preparing for them, and in which there will be the kingdom of justice and love, a kingdom which will be fully perfected when the Lord will come himself (#75).

Hope in the coming kingdom is already beginning to take root in the hearts of people. The radical transformation of the world in the Paschal Mystery of the Lord gives full meaning to the efforts of people, and in particular of the young, to lessen injustice, violence and hatred and to advance all together in justice, freedom, kinship and love (#76). At the same time as it proclaims the Gospel of the Lord, its Redeemer and Saviour, the Church calls on all, especially the poor, the oppressed and the afflicted, to cooperate with God to bring about liberation from every sin and to build a world which will reach the fullness of creation only when it becomes the work of people for people (#77).



CCSJ'S Ask Why TV Programme DVDs 2011

25 January: Religious Freedom – The Path to Peace

Panellists: Fr Joe Harris, Deacon Mike James, Br Noble Khan (Muslim)

Pundit Bramdeo Maharaj (Hindu). Moderator: Leela Ramdeen

22 February: Promoting Social Justice Through Culture

Panellists: Mr Hollis Liverpool a.k.a. Chalkdust, and Mr Felix Edinborough,
The Pierrot Grenade. Moderator: Leela Ramdeen

22 March: Pope Benedict XVI's Lenten Message 2011

Panellists: Fr Clyde Harvey, Mrs Thora Best and Ms Nadine Bushell.
Moderator: Leela Ramdeen

19 April: Journeying to Easter

Panellists: Msgr Jason Gordon, Vicar for Administration and Mr Gerard Pemberton,
retired Director of the Development Finance Ltd. Moderator: Leela Ramdeen

24 May: Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development

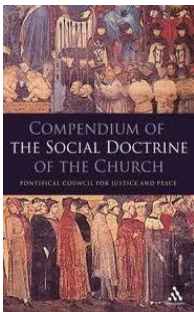
Panellist: Mr Felipe Noguera. Moderator: Sr Thresa Vialva

28 June: Catholics making a difference

Panellists: Fr Clyde Harvey and Ms Andrea Joseph-Hutchinson. Moderator: Leela Ramdeen

26 July: Observing World Unemployment Day

Panellists: Dr Marlene Attzs, Mrs Rhonda Earle, Mr Cheridan Woodruffe.
Moderator: Leela Ramdeen



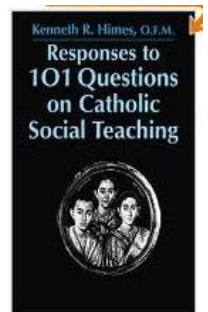
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