



December 2020

Whāia te Tika

Seek Justice

Justice and Peace Commission Catholic Diocese of Auckland Newsletter

After Covid crisis, truck shop sharks circle for Christmas

As Christmas approaches, truck shops are circling like sharks in parts of Auckland, waiting to prey on the poor and vulnerable.

Truck shops have long been a menace in Auckland, charging outrageous prices for food, clothes and household items to people who cannot afford them, but often have no access to normal shops.

Truck shops trap people in contracts they often do not understand. They can remain permanently in debt and do not have enough money for food, clothing or education.

Truck shops tend to operate in areas with many gambling and alcohol outlets. Exploitative pricing was a serious problem during the Covid-19 lockdown.

Action against truck shops has been limited. With annual turnovers often exceeding \$1 million, they can easily afford the fines imposed on them. Between 2015-2018 the Commerce Commission fined 13 companies for breaking consumer law. Penalties averaged \$123,000 each.

Earlier this year Peter Garrick and John Wong from the Social Hazards Committee made an oral



submission to the Economic Development, Science and Innovation Select Committee on the Fair Trading Amendment Bill.

They said that while the Bill provided some protection against unfair practices, it did not go far enough. They said references to 'conduct that is unconscionable' needed to be clearly defined.

They said they would have liked unconscionable behaviour to have included 'exploitative pricing' which was a problem during the lockdown.

"Including 'exploitative pricing' would give the Commerce Commission more effective ways of controlling rogue traders," they said.

They said the Bill also needs to deal with predatory advertising' where goods are offered without ever naming their actual price.

"It exists in plain view on many 'infomercial' slots on TV, drawing people into cheap trials of 'indispensable' spanners and ladders and gym equipment they later find to be exorbitantly priced and almost impossible to return."

Homelessness crisis

Thousands of people could be affected by Auckland's housing crisis this Christmas. On page five we look at the situation with Norm Elliott of the Affordability of Housing Committee. ▶ **Continued P5**



December 2020

Tena koutou katoa everyone. Welcome to the first (and last) 2020 edition of the Justice and Peace Commission newsletter.

The Covid-19 restrictions have affected us all in many ways and has meant that disseminating news about the Commission's activities fell right down the to-do list. There have been a number of changes to the Commission during the year. The year began with Ka Sing Yeung in the role of Chair. She resigned and was replaced by Deacon Chris Sullivan who subsequently also stepped down. Deputy Chair Susanne Montgomerie took over the leadership until Bishop Pat appointed me, Pat Lythe, to chair the Commission for the next two years. Peter Garrick has continued as our Executive Secretary, despite also teaching and coaching students.

It has been a hectic time, but the committees have been doing amazing work, with 15 written and nine oral submissions made during the year. These included:

A submission to MBIE, advocating for the living wage.

A review on migrant exploitation in which we raised concerns about the treatment of Filipino workers on dairy farms and in construction.

A submission on the Urban Development Bill. We emphasised the need to clearly state the public housing purpose of the new entity replacing Housing NZ, Kainga Ora and the need to maintain good environmental/sustainability practices.

The Commission distributed 8000 copies of a leaflet outlining issues ahead of the General Election to parishes. The Commission delivered 220,000 leaflets on euthanasia to letterboxes.

These activities are just some of the essential work done by the committees and the Commission. As we head into 2021 the committees are always looking for new members.

If you are passionate about housing, employment, international peace and justice, anti-poverty, social hazards, environment, bi-culturalism, crime and reconciliation, human life, send your details to our Executive Secretary, Peter Garrick, at peterg@cda.org.nz I am scrambling to get my head around all this astounding work going on in our name!

God bless, Kia Kaha

Pat Lythe New Chair and new editor of this newsletter!

www.aucklandcatholic.org.nz/justice-peace/

Vicar for Social Impact and Communications appointed



Lorraine Elliott has been appointed Vicar for Social Impact and Communication for the Auckland Diocese.

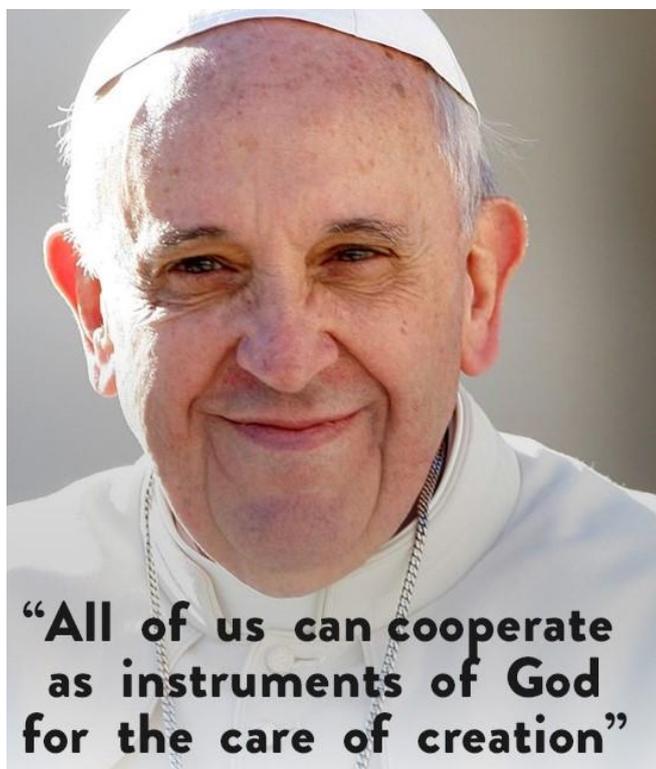
She leads a co-ordinated approach to increase the effectiveness and identity of the Catholic Church's mission to the poor and marginalised so that it is prophetic and effective.

The Vicar is responsible for Catholic Social Services, the Caring Foundation and the Justice and Peace Commission. She will represent the Bishop on related entities.

She has been asked to support the social outreach work of parishes, schools and ethnic communities.

Before joining the Diocese, Lorraine was Executive Director of Maori Health at Waikato DHB. She is Maori of Ngati Porou, Ngati Ruataupare, Nga Puhi, and Ngati Hine descent. Married to Lance, she has three adult sons, and one Moko, Houston, aged six.

Seven year sustainability journey starts in 2021 with release of Vatican action platform



By Susanne Montgomery,
Convenor Environmental Committee

'Response to the cry of the Earth.' 'Response to the cry of the Poor,' 'Ecological Economics.' 'Adoption of a simple lifestyle,' 'Ecological education.' 'Ecological education.' 'Ecological Spirituality' and 'Emphasis on Community involvement and participatory action.' Priorities will vary according to organisation.

If your organisation is not invited to join the seven-year journey, remember that we are already called to become stewards/kaitiaki of our common home. Pope Francis wrote in *Laudato Si'*: "Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or secondary aspect of our Christian experience" Going on this journey with a huge group of Catholics worldwide will bring hope and momentum to a better way of living with our sisters and brothers and with the natural world.

The time for action has also come. Hopefully, we will be among the many who have heard the call and are ready to act, ready to take the next step in the journey to sustainability.

If you want to find inspiration for the journey there are lots of resources with practical advice.

Our committee's own guide, *23 Green Tips – Small Steps Towards a Sustainable Life* can be found here:

<https://www.aucklandcatholic.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/23-Green-tips-Small-Steps-Towards-a-Sustainable-Life.pdf>

The brochure *Laudato Si' – Special Anniversary Year* presents the Action Platform here:

<http://www.humandevlopment.va/en/news/laudato-si-special-anniversary-year-plan.html>.

Journeying towards Care for our Common Home – Five Years after Laudato Si', can be found here:

<http://www.humandevlopment.va/content/dam/sviluppoumano/documenti/2020-09-laudatosi5years-cammino-per-la-cura-della-casacomune-/en-VOL-SDS%20ECOLOGIA%20INTEGRALE%20LINGUA%20INGLESE%20%28ottimizzato%29.pdf>

The Vatican will lead us on a seven year *Laudato Si'* sustainability journey starting in 2021

The Vatican will roll out an exciting *Laudato Si'* Action Platform early next year. The platform will help guide selected families, dioceses, parishes, schools, universities, hospitals, health care centres, businesses, farms and religious orders on a journey to full sustainability.

The journey is expected to begin before the end of the special *Laudato Si'* year which ends on May 24, 2021.

When the action platform is rolled out, a certain number of institutions will be invited to take part. The following year, hopefully double the number will join and so forth for each of the years of the programme.

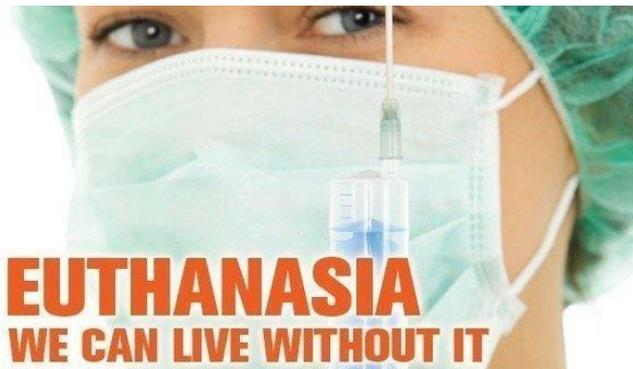
If this happens it will mean a deep transformation of societies around the world. A journey to sustainability has many different aspects to it.

A journey in the spirit of the integral ecology of *Laudato Si'* has these different aspects:

Focus will now be on minimising demand for assisted suicide after End of Life Act referendum

By Catherine Gillies

Convener Human Life Committee



Experiencing two major defeats in the one year was devastating for the Human Life Committee, and our team of volunteers.

Abortion up to birth was introduced just before the March lock down and the referendum results supported the legalisation of euthanasia and assisted suicide.

Sadly, we failed to educate enough people about what euthanasia is and is not. We failed to communicate sufficiently the dangers of the Act, and the very real danger of what introducing euthanasia does to the fabric of society.

We joined forces with the Auckland Catholic Network and used Family First's '20 Reasons to Vote No To Euthanasia' brochure. We received orders for more than 200,000 brochures. In areas where most homes received fliers, there was

stronger 'No' voting. Culture and religion were also strong indicators of voting.

The amount of misinformation fed to and believed by the public was disappointing. One poll showed 79% still thought the Act would legalise turning off life support machines. There was also confusion over being allowed to refuse medical treatment. Both of these have always been legal.

Our main concerns remain the lack of safeguards: No requirement for independent witnesses;

No need to explore alternative avenues of treatment;

No requirement for counselling for depressed, coerced or vulnerable people.

We have lost this milestone battle, so now our focus will turn to minimising the demand for euthanasia and assisted suicide. Those most likely to choose euthanasia do so for social reasons such as loneliness, depression or feeling like a burden.

We hope to develop parish groups, focus on befriending the vulnerable and lonely, offer physical support such as transport and shopping and encourage support for local hospices.

Love drives out fear! Our aim is that people experience God's love through us, that they feel valued, supported and able to face difficult journeys through life and death and into eternity.

Warning labels no silver bullet, but step in the right direction

Warning labels on alcohol won't be a silver bullet, but are a step in the right direction for reducing the risk of foetal alcohol syndrome.

That's the view of Justice & Peace Commission Executive Secretary Peter Garrick, who said about 1800 babies were born each year with foetal alcohol syndrome which can cause heart defects, behavioural problems and intellectual disability.

Decades of inaction meant about 45,000 New Zealanders lived with foetal alcohol spectrum disorder. While labelling is now compulsory, companies will have three years to implement the changes.

**“We have come to pay
him homage”** Matthew 2:2



Adoration of the Magi. Antwerp Mannerist School, c.1520. Metropolitan Museum of Art

Crime Committee welcomes restoration of voting to inmates

The decision to restore voting rights to prisoners serving fewer than three years in prison means New Zealand can hold its head high, according to Crime and Reconciliation Committee convenor Joe Elliott.

“New Zealand took a giant step forward 125 years ago when women gained the vote,” Elliott said.

“The 2010 legislation denying prisoners the vote was a giant step backwards in terms of treating everyone with dignity and respect.

“The 2020 Bill was an opportunity for New Zealand to again hold its head high as a society which gives everyone a fair go.”

The decision affected about 2000 prisoners.

However, an amendment by the Greens to restore voting to all prisoners failed to gather enough support.

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Statistics paint grim picture of homelessness in Auckland

Auckland’s homelessness figurers are grim, but Auckland Mayor Phil Goff appears confident that at least a partial solution is possible. Affordability of Housing Committee convenor Norm Elliott said that in a meeting with Goff earlier this year, he appeared optimistic that the Housing First collective would result in many people being housed.

Housing First is a collaboration between the City Mission, Lifewise, Kāhui Tū Kaha, LinkPeople and VisionWest. Council has provided financial support. Goff said the Auckland council wanted to put a fence at the top of the cliff to prevent people becoming homeless, rather than having an ambulance at the bottom of the cliff. This meant people were not released from hospitals, mental health facilities and prisons with nowhere to live. The Mayor said Council would work with Housing First on the people who were taken off the streets because of Covid- 19. The motel assistance from WINZ had been extended until April 2021.

The Committee received a positive response to a question about whether Council would prompt the Government to build more public housing.

According to figures from Housing First, Waitemata has the highest number of people living without shelter at 38.1%, followed by Otara-Papatoetoe at 11.6%.

Nearly half the total number of people in temporary accommodation were children.

Disabled and rainbow people were over-represented among those living without shelter. A 2018 report commissioned by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development from Otago University showed that nationally, Māori and Pacific people were almost six times the European homeless rate.

The report said rates of severe housing deprivation were highest among Pacific and Māori young people.

A still, small voice



At the combined Justice and Peace commission meeting on November 7, Mary Betz gave a presentation on 'A spirituality of justice and peace – sustaining the journey.'

One of the key texts participants were asked to reflect on was 1 Kings 19-12:

“ . . . a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.”

Sometimes the end of the last sentence is translated as silence. It doesn't really matter. It is in the peaceful, safe, silence that we listen the hardest for God speaking quietly to us.

Social justice retreat planned

The Justice and Peace Commission will hold a retreat on Saturday, March 6 next year.

It will be held at the St Francis Retreat Centre in Hillsbrough Rd from 9am-4pm and will be led by Fr Merv Duffy. It will focus on some social justice aspects of St Mark's Gospel and *Fratelli Tutti*.

Other important dates for 2021 include: Commission-only meetings 9am-3.30pm on February 20 and August 14; Combined Commission meetings 9am-1pm on May 29 and November 20.

Bi-cultural Committee numbers down, but work goes ahead

The Bi-cultural Committee has continued its work, despite being reduced to just three members.

Earlier in the year the group - Susan Healy, Kevin McBride and new member Sr Lee Tan RSJ - made a presentation to a group of priests about the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.

Bi-cultural committee convenor Kevin McBride said some of the priests were new to the diocese. Sr Lee spoke about Maori intentions in the context of colonisation, while McBride presented a timeline of historical events subsequent to the signing, emphasising that Maori had no intention of ceding their sovereignty.

Vicar for Maori, Manuel Beazley, who is an ex officio member of the Bicultural Committee, was able to add extra insight to answers to questions which followed the presentation.

Those who were new to New Zealand especially appreciated the insights into the history of the nation and intercultural relationships.

McBride said the committee was looking forward to further opportunities to work with other Diocesan groups in extending understanding of the importance of implementing the 1989 Synod resolution “ ... to be a Bicultural church and a Bicultural society.”

“We are all saved together or no one is saved” – *Fratelli Tutti*’s message for all of us

Our lives are bound together and we must act in concert and with a sense of justice, or else we must all suffer.

More words will be written about Pope Francis’s new encyclical than will fit in this newsletter, but its main thrust lies in these sentences:

“We need to develop the awareness that nowadays we are either all saved together or no one is saved. Poverty, decadence and suffering in one part of the earth are a silent breeding ground for problems that will end up affecting the entire planet.”

This is what the Holy Father is saying: We are all in this together. We help each other, we help ourselves, we seek allies and make friends, we holds out our hands to people who may not trust us or understand us; we believe in the future, even if we will not live to see it.

“It is truly noble to place our hope in the hidden power of the seeds of goodness we sow, and thus to initiate processes whose fruits will be reaped by others,” Pope Francis says.

While the Holy Father is speaking here about the whole world, it is well to remember that our city, our parish and our diocese are all a microcosm of that greater world.

Fratelli Tutti speaks not just to the wider, global work of the church and its people, but to every parish committee, to every part, great or small of the diocese’s work and to our own labours within the Peace and Justice Commission.

The Pope speaks of the world as one. The dreadful problems we see in our diocese and around the world reflect universal phenomena. We must deal with many phenomena as they intertwine to provide the framework within which a just and fair existence can be lived.



The Holy Father’s new encyclical is heralded on the front page of L’Osservatore Romano.

As he puts it: a “private life cannot exist unless it is protected by public order [and] is safeguarded by law, by a state of tranquillity founded on law, and enjoys a minimum of wellbeing ensured by the division of labour, commercial exchange, social justice and political citizenship.”

The principles of social justice which guide us are part of a larger framework. If any part of that framework fails, then it may all fail. The suffering, for instance, of child miners forced to dig for rare metals may ensure that our mobile phones operate a tenth of a nanosecond faster, but also imposes a moral burden on us and stores up resentment and anger that may one day overwhelm our society.

Our fates are truly bound together. – *Philip Cass*

Where to get Help

Depression Helpline-0800 111 757

Kidslines:0800 543 754

Lifeline: 0800 543 354

Need to Talk? Call or text 1737

Victim Support: 0800 842 046

Rainbow Youth: 09 376 4155

Samaritans: 0800 726 666

What’s Up: 0800 942 8787

Youth line: 0800 376 633 or text 234

2Shine (get-help):0508 744 633

Better Blokes: 09 889 2553

Rape Crisis Centre: 0800 88 33 00

Sexual Abuse HELP Foundation: 09 623 1700

Suicide Crisis Helpline: 05008 828 865

West Papua's Morning Star flag raised to mark occupied nation's independence day

By Philip Cass

Peace and International Justice Committee

Imagine facing 15 years in prison for raising your own flag. Imagine being beaten and tortured for saying you are different.

Imagine being subject to daily racist and physical abuse simply for being who you are.

That is the reality for West Papuans. Despite suffering under a brutal Indonesian occupation for decades, they continue their struggle for independence.

December 1 marked West Papuan national day, the occasion when West Papuans raised the Morning Star flag to signal their independence from Dutch colonial rule.

Murdered

Since the Indonesian occupation of West Papua in 1963, more than 500,000 West Papuans have been murdered by the Indonesian military.

In August last year a West Papua student dormitory in Surabaya, East Java was surrounded by groups linked to the government who hurled racist abuse and made death threats. Indonesia security forces also attacked gatherings in North Maluku and Malang, East Java.

In his 2018 *Catholic Social Justice Series paper, Into the Deep: Seeking justice for the people of West Papua*, Australian author Peter Arndt stressed the importance of faith and solidarity in the struggle of the West Papuan people for justice.

Caritas has noted continued human rights violations. It has also noted that the Indonesian Bishops' Conference has called for all parties to renounce violence and for the Indonesian



While West Papuan students were unable to raise the Morning Star flag on December 1 because of fears of Indonesian reprisals, several ceremonies were held in Auckland. In this picture staff and visiting academics at AUT hold up the flag.

government to actively engage in dialogue with the West Papuan people. The UN statement coincided with a call from the World Council of Churches for international ecumenical support for a comprehensive dialogue for the resolution of the situation in Papua.

In December 2018 the Anglican bishops of New Zealand issued a statement on the oppression of the West Papuan people, which said:

“We stand with our sisters and brothers in West Papua in their struggle to determine their own political destiny.”

The Peace and International Justice Committee calls for an end to human rights abuses against the West Papuan people by the Indonesian military and security forces.

Palestine remains issue of concern

Israel's continued occupation of Palestinian land in violation of numerous United Nations' resolutions remains a matter of grave concern according to the Peace and International Justice Committee.

The recent treaty between the United Arab Emirates and Israel, in an apparent anti-Iranian alliance, also raises serious questions about the future of an independent Palestine.