



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Media Release

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Catholic Bishops speak on violence and peace in Australia

Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir, Governor of New South Wales AC CVO, will launch the Australian Catholic Bishops' 2010 Social Justice Sunday Statement on Tuesday 14th September. The respondent will be Brendan McKeague of Pace e Bene Australia.

The launch will take place at 9.30 am at Mary MacKillop Place, 11 Mount Street, North Sydney.

The title of the Statement is *Violence in Australia: A message of peace*. The Statement speaks about violence at all levels – at the personal level, in families and communities and in our national structures.

It emphasises how peace is not simply the absence of conflict, it entails the true development of people. It means ensuring individuals have the right and means to participate fully in community life and to realise the spiritual, cultural, social and economic potential of their lives.

We are all too familiar with interpersonal violence – street fights, assaults or road rage, for example. But violence can also be seen, with tragic results, in family situations; in bullying in the schoolyard and online; and in divisive political rhetoric and sensationalist media reporting.

One example is the recent demonisation of asylum seekers as a threat to our national security. The bishops call on our national leaders to adopt a bipartisan approach to meeting our international obligations to some of the most vulnerable people in our world.

The statement calls on all people to consider how they can build peace at all levels of society and to identify where exclusion, oppression and violence remain in the life of our nation.

It celebrates those who have worked courageously in the cause of peace, and asks Australians to reflect how we can respond in concrete ways to the Gospel's call to bring peace to our world.

Social Justice Sunday is celebrated on 26 September 2009. The Statement and associated resources can be downloaded at: www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au from 14 September.

For more information, contact:

Bishop Christopher Saunders, Chairman, ACSJC: 0418 260 155

John Ferguson, Executive Officer, ACSJC: 0412 125 222

Note to media: Contact (02) 8306 3499 or admin@acsjc.org.au to confirm attendance.