

From Bishop Philip – Interim General Secretary

There is a saying of Pascal: "In bleak and difficult times, keep something beautiful in your heart."

It is a wisdom we appreciate in the springtime, with its fragrances and blossoms: the delight of children's laughter, the wrinkled face of an old friend and a cup of tea. Moments of grace in prayerful conversation.

Given the events, of the previous week, the **Sunday September 21. Prayers for peace in the Middle East** of our **Act for Peace** were timely and much appreciated. They provided "something beautiful" in our prayerful hearts.

The arrests and allegations of planned dismemberings here in Australia shocked us all last week. The seeping "banality of evil", in Hannah Arendt's poignant phrase, seem to have stretched ISIS reach even into our suburbs.

That some of those arrested were once refugees added another dimension to the disquiet.

Prayers for Iraq, and the Litany for Peace were well integrated into Sunday worship in parishes of our knowing.

The team at Act for Peace will appreciate any feedback you can also provide on the value of our **September 21 resources**.

Liz Stone is providing excellent leadership and management as Associate Interim General Secretary, based in the NCAC Sydney offices.

We liaise regularly about matters needing attention. A particular focus is the important next meetings of the Heads of Churches and NCCA Executive.

Heads of Churches

The Chair His Grace, Bishop Irinej is welcoming Head of Churches to the Metropolitanate Headquarters at St Lazarus Serbian Orthodox Church, 14 Renwick Street, Alexandria for the National Heads of Churches meeting on Wednesday 5 November 2014.

The meeting will commence at 11am and conclude at 4pm. The first session from 11.30am will be a focused discussion on '**Reflective Ecumenism**' in the context of the **re-visioning and current governance review of NCCA**. It will be led by Rev Dr Gerard Kelly.

Members of Council of the Bishop of the Eastern Churches will join the meeting and there will be an open discussion with them in the afternoon session as regards to the tragic current matters in the Middle East. What an important discussion this will be.



NCCA Executive Meeting

Will be held Thursday 6th November, 9.30am at St James Hall, King Street, Sydney.

Agenda items

- Opening Devotion
- Plight of Middle East Christians (including Act for Peace contribution – 1 hour)
- Morning tea
- Visioning and Governance Review 1 ½ hours (a facilitated conversation)
- Lunch

Reports in the afternoon:

- Environment group – report:
- EAPPI Report
- Ken Sumner NATSIEC
- Act for Peace (if not covered above)
- Treasurers report
- S.J. Network: New role – “clearing house”
- Safe Churches
- Other matters (please advise)
- Finish 5:00pm with Closing Prayers by President.



Holidays / Leave

I will be on leave from September 28 – October 14. With my wife Liz and friends, we are walking some of the Camino. In preparation, I have been reading up on an “uncluttered spirituality” and the place of merino wool in the prevention of blisters!

There is a saying of one pilgrim of the Camino: “I am not running anymore: I have run all my life; now I am determined to stop and really live my life.”

Liz Stone is having some leave later in October.

Events / Seminars & Forums

Refugee Action Committee - Labour MPs Speak Out - Refugee Policy Must Change!

The meeting, to be held at 7pm Wednesday, 24th September at the Manning Clark Centre, Australian National University will be hosted by the Canberra Refugee Action Committee.

Labour and Coalition governments have introduced the current policies towards asylum seekers and refugees. Despite the opposition of many ALP members and supporters, Federal Labour continues to support policies such as the indefinite detention of men, women and children on Manus Island, Nauru and elsewhere. Many in its ranks are prepared to fight to change ALP policy. This meeting will hear from Federal Labor Party MPs who are leading the fight. For more information please contact Julie Martin on 0449787577 or Darren Bryant on 0401 653 985

2014 The Long Walk Women's Luncheon Melbourne

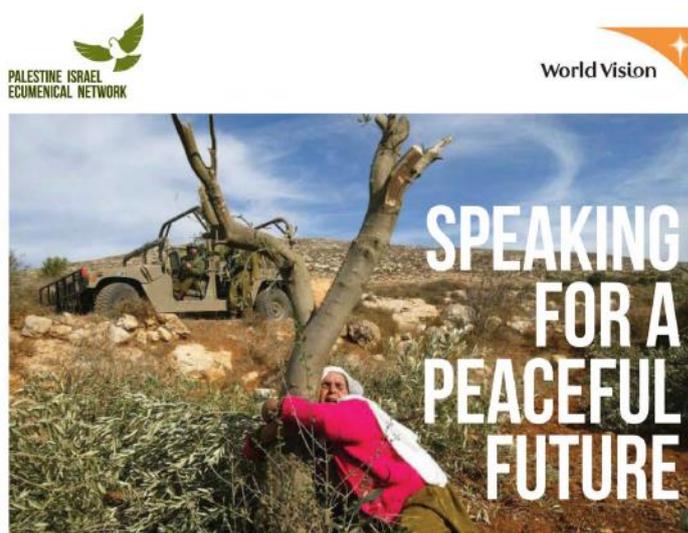
Be entertained by the glorious voices of Vika and Linda Bull, Illana Atkinson and Nathan Lovett-Murray at the Atrium, Grandstand, Flemington Racecourse on Friday 17th October 2014, 11.30am for 12noon start. Cost: \$120 per person, \$1,200 for a table of 10. Email info@thelongwalk.com.au or telephone (03) 8340 2143

The Long Walk Women's Luncheon, is celebrating 10 years of achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.



Speaking for a Peaceful Future

Arda Aghazarian is an Armenian Palestinian Christian from the Old City of Jerusalem. Growing up through violence and military occupation, she has become an advocate for justice and peace in the holy Land, with particular emphasis on conflict resolution and women's rights. She has worked as the media and advocacy coordinator at the YWCA and served on their World Board of Directors. She currently works in filmmaking, takes tours through Jerusalem and gives talks on the region.



Hear Arda Aghazarian speak in the Meeting Room of the NSW Ecumenical Council, Level 7, 379 Kent Street Sydney, on **Tuesday 30th September 2014, 3.00pm**. RSVP: Father Shenouda Mansour at smansour@ncca.org.au or phone: 9299 2215.

Arda will also be travelling around the country, speaking to Church groups, for more information go to www.pien.org.au.

Building peace is difficult but living without peace is a constant torment. Pope Francis, Bethlehem, May 2014

Memorial Lecture for Bishop Michael Putney - Queensland Churches Together and Brisbane Roman Catholic Commission for Ecumenism & Inter-religious Relations invites you on Friday 21 November, 2014, 7.30pm at **St Colomb's Ministry Centre, Anglican Church 25 Victoria St, Clayfield**. It is the hope of the QCT Executive that this will become an annual event. Bishop Michael had many ecumenical friends throughout Australia. At the NCCA we miss his warmth and wisdom.

The Rev. Professor Emeritus Robert W. Gribben will speak on **Trends in World Christianity: Promise and Challenge** (including the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Decree on Ecumenism from the Second Vatican Council)

Cost is \$10 (includes a light supper) For more information contact Margaret Naylor on (07) 3324 3453 or ecum@bne.catholic.net.au Please RSVP by Monday 17th November 2014.

World Council of Churches

“If we are to respond to the ecological crisis in a responsible and substantial way, we must move beyond mere talk to practical action,” said Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople in an official message to the Interfaith Summit on Climate Change to be held this week in New York City.

Sponsored by the World Council of Churches (WCC) in collaboration with the [Religions for Peace](#), the Interfaith Summit on Climate Change took place on the 21st and 22nd September, before the United Nations Climate Summit called by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon.

Social Justice Sunday, September 28 - *Gambling and its Impact in Australia Is Nothing Sacred?*

The NCCA Social Justice Network has chosen the topic of “gambling” for the 2014 Social Justice Sunday resource in the hope of voicing the strong concerns held by the Churches about the encroachment of gambling and its destruction into the daily lives of many Australians. Poker machine reform is no longer on our national political agenda, however the expansion of gambling methods is extending, prompting the subtitle “is nothing sacred?”.

The resource is available in hard copy by phoning or emailing the NCCA. Copies may also be available from either your State Council of Churches.

[Read more: Social Justice Sunday 2014](#)



A Crown for Australia – Social Justice Statement 2014 – 2015

A prayer for sport - as Grand Finals approach

God of all sports (and none):
From our small minds,
how amused you must be
when our prayers about sport
are about our own success or our team's.
Whose side are you on?
How do you choose
When supporters from both sides
implore your divine intervention?

Remind us that in prayer
our hearts are opened to you
and our minds lifted beyond ourselves.
Just as prayer changes us,
not you, O God,
so sport too, can lift us beyond ourselves.
So, we pray:

We give thanks for the gift of our bodies,
For the ability to run, walk, jump,
swim, catch and throw.

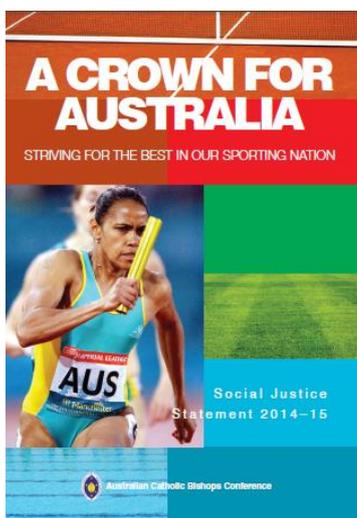
We pray for patience and discipline,
that we may learn the joy of mastering new skills:
achieving success, and cheerfully bearing failure
in the company of others.

We pray that our relationships be enriched
through the friendships we form.
May we learn to include others across borders
of language, colour, gender and religion.

We pray that we care for others.
May we especially look out for those
who are differently abled,
and those often left on the boundaries.

Through our vigilance
may we always play fair,
and ensure that no one is abused or exploited.

We ask this through Jesus your son. Amen.



To view more go to www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au