



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Wednesday, September 17, 2008

Media Alert

Catholic Bishops call for action to achieve justice for the poor in Australia's affluent society

The 2008 Social Justice Sunday Statement will be launched on Wednesday 17 September at the Lasabel Menton Theatre, Mary MacKillop Place, 11 Mount Street, North Sydney, at 9.45am for 10.00am. Professor Julian Disney AO, National Chair of Anti-Poverty Week, will launch the Statement. The Respondent is Ms Elizabeth Proust, Director of Nonprofit Australia.

In the statement, *A Rich Young Nation: The challenge of affluence and poverty in Australia*, the Bishops have issued an urgent call for action to achieve justice for those afflicted by poverty in our affluent society.

Although Australia has experienced great prosperity, "there are many who are wealthy, but live in spiritual poverty, and there are those who have been bypassed by the economic growth and live in material poverty," the Bishops say.

The Chairman of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council, Bishop Christopher Saunders of Broome, said that no matter how well the economy performs, the health of our society can be judged by the treatment of its most vulnerable citizens.

"Following years of prosperity, Australia has the means to act for the common good and with a special concern for the poor. How we use the world's resources and foster human development are concerns for every Australian.

"What values characterise our daily lives: Have we become obsessed with economic success and material acquisition? Do we recognise those in need and our obligation to do something about it?"

In 1992, as Australia emerged from global recession, the Catholic Bishops warned of higher levels of serious poverty and the emergence of an underclass of gravely disadvantaged people. With the 2008 Social Justice Statement they are renewing that call for justice for those afflicted by poverty in our affluent society. Some who are particularly vulnerable include Indigenous families and communities, single-parent families, low-paid workers, refugees and people who are homeless.

The Statement also includes practical ideas for action to help people from all walks of life begin to address and prevent poverty in the community around them.

For more information, contact:

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Bishop Christopher Saunders, Chairman, ACSJC: 0418 260 155

Note to media: Contact ACSJC on 02 8306 3499 to confirm attendance at launch.

Social Justice Sunday is celebrated on 28 September 2008. **The Statement can be downloaded at:**
www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au from 17 September.