Reaching a venerable age and flourishing “There are aspects of life which cannot be judged in terms of economic efficiency ...”

If we look through *The Compendium of Social Doctrine of the Church*, we find one passage which is key for acting in order to promote the common good including the good of the older members of the community.

Love is also expressed in the generous attention shown to the elderly who live in families ... They are ... a resource for the well-being of the family and of the whole society ... [They] constitute an important school of life, ... fostering the growth of younger generations, who learn to seek not only their own good but also that of others (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (PCJPC), 222).

The older members of our families and communities need to be loved and there is no substitute for this but they also need a proper standard of living: decent housing and appropriate health care services and insurance.

Some social research organisations—think tanks—have listed the contributions that the older person can and often is making to families, communities and the common good. These are described on the following page.

If we objectively consider the contribution of older generations to younger generations, families and society we will understand the urgency of advocating on their behalf when political systems begin to diminish their role by using or rather misusing measurements of “efficiency and functionality” (PCJP 222).

Nevertheless, if the factors of economic efficiency were used, senior Australians would still shine.

Primary care given by seniors has been “valued at $596 per week, which means this group of mature Australians provides a service valued at $15.5 billion per annum” and their volunteering has been “valued as a $16.3 billion contribution to the Australian economy on an annual basis” (Graham, 2015). Below are some contributions that the older people are making to families, communities and the common good.

Continued on page 2

ANZAC Day 2016

ANZAC day is a time when Australians and New Zealanders contemplate the significance of the ultimate sacrifice. Those who have travelled will know that ANZAC day is unique among the events organised to remember wars and conflicts. Peter Weir’s movie *Gallipoli* captures the personal courage which inspired many and the tragedy which cost so many Australian families so much. The message of Gallipoli has not fallen on deaf ears. Younger Australians have responded with unexpected generosity.

ANZAC day can be a time for reflecting on “the promotion of peace”: an important principle in the Church’s great treasury of social teaching.

Continued on page 2
Venerability and vulnerability
(Continued from page 1)

Carers

People aged over 59 - provide care for parents, in-laws, disabled children and their grandchildren.

According to National Seniors Australia (2013), over 70% of people aged over 59 care often full-time for a spouse or parent in-law.

A 2006 briefing paper for the Australia Government stated that:

Australian grandparents are the biggest providers of informal child care for children between birth and 12 years, but particularly for babies and toddlers while their parents are in the workforce or studying (Ochiltree, 2006).

Volunteers

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) defines ‘volunteering’ as an activity done by “people who willingly gave unpaid help in the form of time, service or skills, though an organisation or group” (Volunteering Australia, 2015).

Volunteering Australia also found that: “[s]enior Australians contributed the highest number of volunteer hours” (Volunteering Australia, 2015).

Yet despite being impressive, these figures do not represent all that older members contribute because “there are aspects of life ... which cannot be judged in terms of economic efficiency” (PCJP 222).

The PCJP points out that the older members of families and communities do extremely important work in transmitting “human, cultural, moral and social values” (PCJP 222).

Transmitters of culture and tradition

A briefing paper produced for the Australian Government found evidence that older members of families (including grandparents) are shaping the culture and traditions of future communities as well as those of their own family (Hillman, 1999; Kornhaber, 1996 cited in Ochiltree, 2006).

Grandparents can reflect and epitomize the values they pass on.

Communicators

Furthermore, this role of epitomizing cultural values and traditions is enhanced by an effective communication style. Children find grandparents willing to listen. Educators praise parents for listening to their children but parents are often busy with work and home management.

Grandparents are usually not so caught up with the daily routines and issues of living with the grandchildren and have more time to listen, observe and attend to small things than busy parents (Ochiltree, 2006).

Vulnerability

The older generation contribute on a massive scale and effectively to the Common Good. They deserve to be venerated but they can also be vulnerable if social and political leaders fail to see their value and use inappropriate methods of evaluation. Our older family and community members deserve to be venerated because they have gone before present generations, forging the tools which we use and making habitable the places where we now live. What is more they are also forging the future as transmitters and communicators of culture and values.

It is important to protect the economic rights of the older members of our communities. It is important that they have decent housing and appropriate health care services and insurance.

For the good of the whole

The need to respect human dignity is an important reason to advocate for older people; however, it is not the only one. Another reason, is the survival of all. Failing to recognize the contribution the older generation makes, is not only unjust but can jeopardize the good of the whole: the good of younger generations, the good of the family, the good of society—in short the common good. (PCJP 222)

Sources


Volunteering Australia. (2015). Key facts and statistics about volunteering in Australia: Information Sheet

If you have some ideas about how to advocate for the older people in our community, please contact us at tsjpc@ashitas.org.au.

ANZAC Day

Continued from page 1

- “Peace is the goal of life in society” (490) and “a universal duty” (494).
- “Peace is not merely the absence of war” or “the maintenance of a balance of power” (494).
- Peace “requires the establishment of ... justice and charity” (494).
- “Peace is built up day after day” and “can flourish only when all recognize that everyone is responsible for promoting it” (495).

The effort to achieve peace is a key theme of ANZAC Day. Families and communities also remember the bravery of those who faced overwhelming odds for love for country, family and neighbours. It is worth reflecting on this as well.

The day belongs to those who made the ultimate sacrifice in order to respond to a call for help and at the same time risk sharing in the pain. Communities and families remember efforts to resist and to act: to resist the destruction of peace and order and to defend what is truly human.

“Love frees us to do extraordinary things... This love drives out fear” (Archbishop Julian Porteous, Love drives out fear, p. 146).

Source


Art at the service of the common good

Art points to the Church’s perennial teaching on justice and peace.

Art has always been recognized as a powerful persuasive force so powerful that there have been some efforts to put limits on the work of artisans.

Art has played an important role in furthering the task of justice and peace. Some readers would be familiar with the image Mother of All used by the ACMRO on its migrant and refugee kit.

The graphic artist Louis Barcelona is Project Support Officer with The Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office (ACMRO). In a recent email conversation, Barcelona provides some background to the picture.

**Without Frontiers**

I have had the opportunity to view a copy of *Church without Frontiers, Mother to All* and I was struck by the cover. I was wondering if you have time to explain the inspiration behind the artwork.

Barcelona: We wanted the final image to represent everyone regardless of their ethnicity, skin colour, or any difference in that matter, which is why we maintain the low poly appearance of the whole image (April 2016).

I was interested in the way you represent the woman and the child. Is it a Madonna and Christ-Child?

Barcelona: It is somewhat similar to Madonna and Christ-Child but the inspiration behind the cover of last year’s migrant and refugee kit happened naturally. We wanted to visually elaborate [sic] the Pope’s Message for World Day of Migrants and Refugees, which was “Church without frontiers, Mother to all”.

As I mentioned before, the mother in the image to represent[s] the [C]hurch opening its arms to welcome all people without distinction or boundary while the child represent[s] us who are accepted by the [C]hurch wholeheartedly (April, 2016).

**Associations**

Associations play an important role in shaping messages. Words and images can be associated with political groups and ideologies. These associations can be more or less subtle.

For example, the PCJPC distinguishes “solidarity” as more than a “feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far” (PCJPC, 193).

True solidarity takes into account the Common Good and aims to respect the spirit of initiative.

**Common Good**

The characteristics of true solidarity are “firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good” (PCJPC, 193). This reminds justice and peace organisations about taking into account all those affected by any policy or initiative so that none are made vulnerable because decisions did not take into account the good of the whole.

**Subsidiarity: Respecting Initiative**

The Compendium sheds further light of what this motherly care is like. It warns against taking away the spirit of initiative from recipients of assistance.

The principle of solidarity, even in the fight against poverty, must always be appropriately accompanied by that of subsidiarity, thanks to which it is possible to foster the spirit of initiative, the fundamental basis of all social and economic development in poor countries (PCJPC 449).

This teaching poses the question: what actions enable refugees and migrants to become “the principal builders of a new and more human future for everyone” (PCJPC, 449).

**In Conclusion**

The Church’s teaching promotes a careful and balanced approach to the work of justice and peace. It reminds justice and peace organisations that there is not peace without justice and respect for the common good and no true solidarity without subsidiarity.

**Sources**

*Ad Caeli Reginam*. His Holiness Pope Pius XII. Encyclical on Proclaiming the Queenship of Mary Promulgated October 11, 1954

Email from Louis Barcelona (April 2016).


Image reproduced by permission of The Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office (ACMRO) and the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC).

The title of the statement is:

For Those Who’ve Come Across the Seas: Justice for refugees and asylum seekers

WHO CAN ENTER?

The competition is open to all secondary and university students in Tasmania.

HOW CAN I ENTER?

Students can enter the competition using either of the following two formats:

**Literary:** A short story, poem or short argument These need to be typed and saved as word or PDF and sent as an email attachment.

Word limit: 500 Words

**Visual Art:** A visual piece no larger than the size of A3 paper (including any framing). This can be digitally produced so long as it adheres to copyright regulations. 3D art pieces cannot be accepted because of the postage and storage difficulties. These need to be sent by surface mail.*

WHEN DOES THE COMPETITION CLOSE?

The competition closes on the last day of Term Three 2016.

For more information please contact Paulette Marsh, Resource Officer for the TCJPC on 62086271 or email tcjpc@aohtas.org.au.

A prize for the winning literary piece and a prize for the winning visual art piece will be awarded.

* No responsibility for loss or damage to the entry incurred during delivery or display can be accepted by the TCJPC or the Hobart Catholic Archdiocese.

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**Disclaimer**

The views expressed in this newsletter and the linked articles are entirely those of the author and not necessarily those of the Archdiocese of Hobart.