



# Caritas Update

AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

The Catholic Agency for Justice, Peace and Development

[www.caritas.org.nz](http://www.caritas.org.nz)

ISSUE 68 SPRING 2015

## KIWI FAMILIES: IT'S OUR STORY



"AMONG OUR TASKS AS WITNESSES TO THE LOVE OF CHRIST IS THAT OF GIVING A VOICE TO THE CRY OF THE POOR."  
POPE FRANCIS

### FAMILY POVERTY IN NEW ZEALAND

This year for Social Justice Week we ask all Catholics to listen, pray and reach out to those in difficulty around us, so that all can participate and contribute as part of our wider human family.

A quarter of all families with children in Aotearoa New Zealand experience income poverty, so this year we have decided to focus on what it takes for all Kiwi families to flourish.

For families living with poverty, just making ends meet every week can cause a lot of stress and feelings of isolation.

Caritas staff met with four communities around the country who work with struggling families, and from these meetings we have produced a 20 minute documentary. The film, *Kiwi Families: It's Our Story*, looks at the strategies these groups use to help families not only survive, but to thrive.

We hope that by opening up a discussion about this issue we can increase awareness and understanding of the challenges struggling families face today in our country, while encouraging parishes and communities to take the next steps to ensure that all families are able to participate fully in our society.

Our additional Social Justice Week materials have a wealth of information and ideas on how to take these next steps.

We encourage groups to hold a screening of *It's Our Story*, with time for a discussion afterwards. A copy of the film will be provided to all parishes, along with a discussion guide, brochures, posters and liturgies.

**All Social Justice Week material is available online at [www.caritas.org.nz](http://www.caritas.org.nz)**



### CARITAS CHALLENGE

#### Congratulations & Thanks

to all those who took part in Caritas Challenge 2015!

26 new groups took part this year, making a total of

**6,800 young people**

across the country who took up the Challenge to raise money and walk in solidarity with people in the Philippines who face real challenges because of natural disasters.



## SOCIAL JUSTICE WEEK IN SCHOOLS

The school theme for Social Justice Week this year is 'Family Ups and Downs'. The resources created aim to empower students and youth to play a positive role in their family and to develop a healthy resilience to the ups and downs that Kiwi families face.

The importance of family/whānau is highlighted in the resources, and the key message is that all families have ups and downs and need support from many people in different ways. Students are challenged to make an action plan to help families/whānau that are struggling.

A wide range of fantastic resources, including a game, teacher booklets, worksheets and liturgies, are available for schools on our website: [www.caritas.org.nz](http://www.caritas.org.nz)

You can also order any of the resources by calling **0800 22 10 22** during regular office hours.



## POPE'S MESSAGE ON THE ENVIRONMENT

*The natural environment is a collective good, the patrimony of all humanity and the responsibility of everyone.*

Pope Francis, Laudato Si'

Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment, Laudato Si', was met with enthusiasm in the Caritas office. In it, the Pope challenges all of us to step up and begin actively protecting the Earth in order to maintain a safe and healthy environment for the whole human family. He recognises that it is often the poor who are affected most by climate change. This message spoke to the heart of two of Caritas' key strategic priorities: environmental justice and reducing poverty.

Laudato Si' conveys a sense of the urgency with which we need to act to mitigate climate change. Caritas is aware of the need to act without delay as many of our partners in Oceania are already suffering from the negative effects of a changing environment, such as drought, rising sea levels and extreme weather patterns.

Last year on St Francis Day, 4 October, we published the report: *Small yet strong: Voices from Oceania on the environment*. In it we summarised a collection of discussions with people from New Zealand and around Oceania about

changes in the environment that they are witnessing and how they are learning to cope with them.



*Small yet strong: Voices from Oceania on the environment.*

In October this year we will publish a follow up 'state of the environment' report for Oceania that provides a status check of five key issues affecting people in the region: coastal erosion and sea level rise; food and water; offshore mining and drilling; severe weather emergencies; and climate change funding.

## COMING UP IN THE JUSTICE AND PEACE DIARY

### 12 SEPTEMBER

**Seminar on family poverty** featuring local politicians and Caritas staff member David Nonu. Palmerston North Diocesan Centre.

### 13 SEPTEMBER

**Start of Social Justice Week 2015 and launch of new Poverty & Justice Bible.** Cardinal John Dew will hold a special Mass at Saints Peter and Paul Mass Centre, Lower Hutt.

### 13-19 SEPTEMBER

**Social Justice Week** focuses on family poverty and what it takes for all families in NZ to flourish.

### 4 OCTOBER

**St Francis Day Mass to launch 'state of the environment' in Oceania report.** Christchurch.

### 5 NOVEMBER

**Parihaka Day**, celebrating peace and reconciliation.

**Full details of events online:**  
[www.caritas.org.nz](http://www.caritas.org.nz)

## RETURN TO DARFUR

*Reflections from Mark Mitchell, Caritas Humanitarian Programmes Coordinator*

It's nearly eleven years since I was last in Darfur with Caritas. Many of the humanitarian organisations have left for a variety of reasons, including security and lack of funding.

Darfur has dropped out of the international headlines, but the situation continues to be one of ongoing internal conflict. As many as 300,000 people are dead and another 2.5 million have been displaced.

The programme we support provides basic needs such as water, health, shelter and nutrition in the Internally Displaced People (IDP) camps.



I asked a group of women in Bilel camp in Nyala what their needs were. They want assistance with livelihoods,

having already started selling vegetables and established a waste management committee.



I met Ikhlas Abdul Muneer in a new area of Hassa Hisa camp in Central Darfur. She arrived about two months ago with her four children in a group of more than 70 women and children. Very few men were with them. They had walked for four days from Golo, an area in the rebel held area of Jebel Marra to find sanctuary in the IDP camp.

In time, people like Ikhlas hope they will be able to build a new life for themselves in the camp. With support for livelihoods, she hopes to be able to create a job for herself and provide a living to support her family.

## BUILDING BACK BETTER IN NEPAL

It is three months since the earthquakes that caused widespread damage in Nepal. Our partner Caritas Nepal have led the emergency response and have helped more than 290,000 people, some in extremely remote locations.

Currently Caritas is prioritising the distribution of corrugated iron sheeting so that families can reinforce their temporary shelters against the monsoon rains. Caritas is also dedicated to planning for the longer term and helping people 'build back better'.

Thanks to Caritas, Mishri Nepal (74) and others in her village are receiving the aid they need to survive the monsoon rains.

"It's not easy to reach us, the road is not smooth, but we thank Caritas Nepal for always coming and not forgetting us," she said.



## SCHOOLS AND STABILITY FOR IRAQI CHILDREN

One of the many things that gets left behind when a family is uprooted by war is a child's education. If left without schooling for a long time, the ongoing effects on a child's life and possibilities can be devastating.

Caritas is running child support centres in Iraqi Kurdistan where more than 2,000 Iraqi children can relax and play in a safe place.

"The goal is to ultimately get kids enrolled in school," explains Courtney Lare from CRS (Caritas in the United States).

"We intend our child support centres to be a bridge back to a formal education."



This is just one aspect of the important work we are supporting in Iraq, Palestine and in Lebanon with Syrian refugees through our Peace in the Middle East campaign.

**Find out more about our ongoing work in the region online:**

**[www.caritas.org.nz](http://www.caritas.org.nz)**

# FACING CLIMATE CHANGE TOGETHER

As the Catholic Church and wider community reflect on Pope Francis' recent message on care of our planet, climate justice advocate Ursula Rakova of Papua New Guinea gives a human face to the challenges faced in the Pacific from environmental degradation.

A pioneer in Papua New Guinea's environmental movement and campaigner for the survival of her people, Ursula was born on the Carteret Islands, a small group of islands near Bougainville that are threatened by rising sea levels.

In 2006 she set up Tulele Peisa ("Sailing in the wind on our own") as a community-based organisation to carve out a new future for her people.



Faced with coastal erosion, flooding and a loss of traditional food sources, Ursula and her community negotiated with the Bougainville Diocese of

the Catholic Church for land on the mainland to resettle some of the Carteret Islanders.

Caritas is working with the diocese to build sustainable agricultural and fishing livelihood programmes for Carteret Islanders and mainland Bougainvilleans. We are also promoting awareness of the environmental challenges that the people of Oceania face.

In July Caritas organised a speaking tour of New Zealand with Ursula to talk about Tulele Peisa and their work.

While she was here she was also able to meet with fair-trade and cocoa importers to expand the markets her people are growing cocoa and other cash crops for in their new home.



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### I would like to (tick all that apply):

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- Receive newsletters by email *(please supply email address above)*

### Enclosed is my gift as a cheque for:

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## If you would like to support us, you can do so:

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Make a direct deposit from your bank account to ours via the internet:

- Caritas account number: 03 0518 0211216 00

Please include the following in the reference section of your online form:

- Your Caritas donor number (if known)
- Your surname (include initials if space allows) and email us at caritas@caritas.org.nz with your full name, postal address and details of your payment so we can send a receipt.

### BY CREDIT CARD

- Visit us online at [www.caritas.org.nz/donate](http://www.caritas.org.nz/donate) and click 'Donate online now', or
- Phone us at 04 496 1742 or freephone 0800 22 10 22 (during office hours: Monday-Friday 8.30am-5pm)

### BY POST

Send us a cheque or credit card details using the coupon on the left, or ask for information about our regular giving programme or making a bequest.

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