

Pax Christi Australia (NSW)

Convenor's Report

November 5, 2018

October 9 Endorsement of the international statement 'NO International Fleet Review at the Jeju Naval Base

Gangjeong village has witnessed the steady encroachment of the base's presence, along with the appearance of more and more navy personnel whose gradual takeover of the village amounts to a militarized form of settler colonialism. South Korea will host the International Fleet Review over four days beginning October 10th, when warships from 15 nations, including Philippines and the United States will arrive off the coast of Gangjeong village. The very name 'International Fleet Review' sounds bland and apparently benign but the 'parade of warships' or 'military festival' which the event represents gives a greater sense of urgency to what the event really signifies, namely the relapse of Jeju into an international military outpost and another step in the re-militarization of the so called 'island of world peace'.

For more background to the campaign please refer to my piece in the latest Vocation for Justice magazine: <http://www.columbans.co.uk/media/vocation-for-justice-magazine/>

2018 International Solidarity Statement against the International Fleet Review in Jeju

No International Fleet Review in Jeju

Let's make Jeju Island the island of Peace

Let's make the Pacific the sea of Peace

We, the undersigned organisations and individuals, strongly oppose the International Fleet Review which will be held at Jeju Naval Base in Gangjeong Village from 10 October. This is the biggest event by the Korean navy since Jeju naval base was constructed and around 50 vessels and 20 aircraft from 45 countries will gather in Jeju Naval Base. A marine inspection, an open house event on vessels and in the base, and a military industry exhibition are scheduled.

The international fleet review, gathering warships from around the world, will heighten the military tension in the region and create dark clouds of conflict in the midst of the growing desire to open a new era of peace and coexistence and end the war on the Korean peninsula and Northeast Asia.

Jeju Naval Base was constructed on top of state violence against the villagers, lies, and destruction of the natural environment. We all remember the coercive construction process and problems of the Jeju Naval Base. While supporting Jeju islanders' desire to establish this beautiful island as the Island of World Peace, we strongly oppose the International Fleet Review being held in Jeju Island. Since the establishment of Jeju Naval Base, the militarisation of Jeju Island has sped up. Warships from different countries including a U.S. nuclear submarine have already been frequently visiting the Jeju Naval Base. In addition to this, a U.S. nuclear aircraft carrier will also join the International Fleet Review. We are concerned that this International Fleet Review will widen the gate of the Jeju Naval Base to the Japanese and the U.S. warships. The U.S. Pacific commander already expressed his wish to station a Zumwalt Stealth Destroyer at the Jeju Naval Base. In addition to building the naval base, the Korean Navy reinforced the marine corps in Jeju and also expressed its plan to use the 2nd airport as its air base which the Government is forcibly working to construct in Seongsan, Jeju Island.

The International Fleet Review in Jeju Island will confirm Jeju Island as a military outpost, retrogress peace on the Korean Peninsula, and expedite militarisation in the Indian Ocean and the Pacific. The U.S. changed the Pacific Command into Indo-Pacific Command last May. This clearly shows its will to prioritize military hegemony in the Indian Ocean and the Pacific, instead of peaceful cooperation. The U.S. has not been hiding its plan to establish a NATO-like military alliance in the Indo-Pacific region. Many peace organisations are concerned that Jeju Island will become an outpost against China by the U.S. and its military allies.

The International Fleet Review will internationally establish the existence and military use of the Jeju Naval Base. This seriously jeopardizes the future vision of Jeju Island as 'The Island of Peace' declared by the South Korean government in 2005.

The two Koreas declared 'a new era of peace' and are walking towards the establishment of a peace system and denuclearization on the Korean peninsula. Korean people's efforts to move on to peace and coexistence from the hostility of the past should be linked to efforts to make the Pacific peaceful. We support Jeju islanders' desire to make an Island of Peace and oppose the militarization of the Pacific. The International Fleet Review in Jeju Island must be stopped immediately.

No International Fleet Review in Jeju!

Let's make Jeju Island the island of Peace! Let's make the Pacific the sea of Peace!

10 October 2018

October 10 ACRATH (Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans)

October 11, Palm Sunday Rally and March meeting (cancelled)

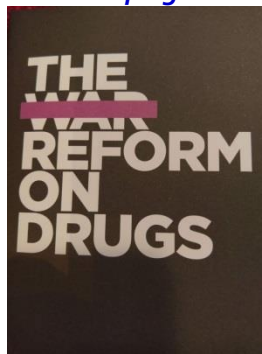
October 11 Pax Christi Asia-Pacific Skype

The meeting had one item on the agenda and that was to find ways to make the regional network more dynamic.

Following were the suggestions made:

- Continue to invite like-minded people from the region to the network, i.e., members of JPIC
- Continue reaching out to members from countries like Taipei and South Korea
- Keep issues close to our hearts visible, i.e., Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons
- Encourage members to contribute articles to Disarmament Times or to PCI
- Continue sending A-P members information from the region that relate to peace, climate change, gender equality, human rights, indigenous spirituality, peace education and disarmament
- Continue sending petition letters to the e-group and follow through

October 12, Uniting Church Fair Treatment Campaign launch at Town Hall by Sir Richard Branson



The Uniting Church campaign calling on the Australian government to reform drug policy, was officially launched today (12 October) by Sir Richard Branson in front of a crowd of 2,000 people at Sydney Town Hall.

Fair Treatment is a grassroots campaign that seeks the decriminalisation for possession and personal use of small amounts of illicit drugs, as well as investment into harm reduction treatment. The Uniting Church NSW and ACT Synod and Uniting, have spearheaded this campaign which is backed by more than 60 organisations, including the Law Society of NSW, the NSW Bar Association, and the NSW branch of the Health Services Union.

In an opening address Uniting Church NSW/ACT Moderator Rev. Simon Hansford, said the Fair Treatment campaign is seeking better outcomes for people affected and action from policy makes.

'Our faith compels us to nurture, support, care and offer hope and life for everybody in our society – especially those who are marginalised or disadvantaged, who are often those most affected by drug policy,' said Rev. Hansford.

The launch included a panel discussion with Sir Richard Branson, along with Director of the Uniting Medically Supervised Injecting Centre (MSIC) Dr Marianne Jauncey and Executive Secretary of the Global Commission on Drug Policy (GCDP) Dr Khalid Tinasti, PhD. The panel discussion was moderated by SBS' Jan Fran (*The Feed*), who was also the MC.

Sir Richard Branson said that we needed to persuade politicians to treat drugs as health problem and not a criminal problem.

'The war on drugs has been going on now for nearly 60 years, as an entrepreneur and a businessman, if something failed so abysmally, we would have closed it down 59 years ago,' said Sir Branson.

The panel agreed that the issue of drugs is a health and social issue.

'Really there is no pathway to harm reduction or to an effective treatment without decriminalisation and without ending social stigma and discrimination,' said Dr Tinasti.

October 12, AABCC Film showing at Edmund Rice Centre. Screening short films about Space Force.

US President Trump plans a Space Force which would ensure US 'control and domination' of space on behalf of corporate interests.

It is an insane idea which would lead to the heavens becoming a war zone.

The move will likely spur a new international competition to weaponise space.

There will be an 'arms race in space' and inevitably war in space.

It will all be nuclear. It's the ultimate nightmare.

The cost may be \$500 billion or more in the coming decade but the real cost will depend on how greedy the aerospace companies are.

So much of space is now private business, with Elon Musk and Bezos and all kind of companies talking about making super profits out there.

US Senator Bernie Sanders commented: 'Maybe, just maybe, we should make sure our people are not dying because they lack health insurance before we start spending billions to militarize outer space.'

October 13 Eucharist at The Grail, North Sydney, to celebrate the canonisation of Oscar Romero and Paul VI.



Alison Healey, leader of the Grail with members at the Eucharist

The First Reading from *The Scandal of Redemption* by Oscar Romero

The role of the church is to create community on earth – a community of faith and love. Others are trying to break up communities and to sow terror in those who proclaim the word of God and in those who meet to reflect on it. We have a right to meet together and to help one another in our community reflection. In this way our faith keeps growing, our worship of God becomes more profound and we become more united among ourselves. To create community is a command of Christ: 'Go and proclaim the Gospel to every creature'.

Do not fear that those of us who speak about these issues have become subversives. We are simply Christians who draw from the commands of the gospel the consequences that our people and all humankind need at this time. The gospel path leads this way: through poverty of spirit, through the struggle for justice, through the sowing of peace. The paths of the Beatitudes are today very dangerous paths and that is why there are so few people willing to walk on them. Let us not be afraid! Let us keep walking on this road that will one day lead us to death so that people can pray for us but so that we will also be saints in heaven participating in the glory of the risen Christ!

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God

The Second Reading from Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Populorum Progressio*

We appeal to all our sons and daughters to take up as their own proper task the renewal of the temporal world. It belongs to the laity, without waiting for orders and directives, to take the initiative freely and to infuse a Christian spirit into the mentality, customs, laws and structures of the community in which they live. Changes are necessary, basic reforms are indispensable. Lay men and women should strive resolutely to permeate their world with the spirit of the gospel.

We are sure you will want to bring your talents to a cooperative effort to help humankind vanquish selfishness, pride and rivalries, to overcome ambitions and injustices, to open up to all the road to a more human life, where each person will be loved and helped as your neighbour. We ask you anew to work with all your heart and intelligence towards this goal.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God

From the homily: Though finally to be canonised, Oscar Romero was already acclaimed a saint by the people. His cause would not have happened without Benedict XVI giving the green light to restart the process in 2012 after being blocked for over 30 years. There was a fear he was killed for his politics, not religious reasons. At the time, anyone standing up for human rights or challenging the social order, was classified as a subversive. Thousands paid the price. His death has finally been recognised, like that of Jesus, as a consequence of witnessed to God's reign, his faithful proclamation of the Gospel. John Paul II pushed for détente with a government that was in league with landed oligarchs and most of Romero's fellow bishops, the papal legate, and U.S. government representatives sought to dampen his activism. It is still a sore point that Romero's own church failed to fully embrace liberation theology in Central and Latin America. It was the *campesinos*, who had lived under five decades of military dictatorships who saw him differently and he saw them differently. **His heart burned!!**

October 16, Action for Peace and Development in the Philippines (APDP) meeting at Enmore

October 20 Pacific Islanders at Edmund Rice Centre with former president of Kiribati, Anote Tong



Mr Paul Wenham Consul General (Kiribati) Anote Tong, Mrs Wenham



Kiribati dancers



Marita McInerney and visitor

October 22, Community Justice Coalition Annual General Meeting.

October 25, Pacific Climate Watch, Inter-congregational Voice on Climate Change in the Pacific

Claude continues to add numerous photos to the Pacific Climate Watch Facebook as part of the Climate Change is not a joke campaign. The committee plans to meet with Craig Laundy (Federal Member for Reid) now that he has indicated he will stand in the next Federal election. Contact will be made with Sam Chisholm who is the Opposition candidate for the local seat. With regard to the monograph for the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council, Claude updated the committee on progress of the work. A lot of work still needs to be done on it. The matter of the next UN Conference on Climate Change (COP 24) was raised. It will take place at Katowice in Poland from December 2-14, 2018. Little has been made public about it.

October 23 Talk to teachers at Douglas Park. Claude was taken there by Marita McInerney.

October 25 Anote Tong, former President of Kiribati, talk at Good Samaritan Congregational Centre, Glebe: Rising Seas: Climate Change in the Pacific



Chair of Inter-congregational Voice on Climate Change in the Pacific introducing the night

Anote Tone delivering his talk



Pacific Islander religious sisters from various congregations

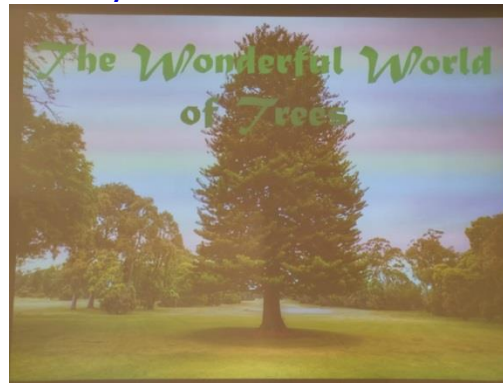


Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart with Anote Tong

October 27 Kevin McDonnell on Science, Evolution and Spirit of Trees and Patrick Shirvington The Lure of Trees for the Artist at Mercy Convent, Parramatta



Brother Kevin O'Donnell cfc who gave the first presentation of the day with Sister Marie Butcher rsm



Theme of second presentation by artist Patrick Shirvington

John Feehan who was mentioned a number of times in Kevin's talk have this talk recently. Here is an excerpt: John Feehan, **The New View of Creation in *Laudato si***
[Download the article here in PDF](#)

Thank you for this invitation to share with you, and the opportunity to meet so many of you for the first time.

If you were to read *Laudato si'* without having read the advance publicity three years ago, and were looking for a suitable sound byte to summarise its leading theme, I don't think you would call it a document on climate change (about which there are really only three pages), and to say it is the encyclical on the environment is too vague to tell you anything. I think you might call it the encyclical that focuses – for the first time in a document of this kind – on the real meaning of life on earth, and the crisis the bleeding away of its abundance and diversity faces us with and calls us to confront.

It is only 25 years since the wake-up call first really sounded. In 1992 the United Nations convened its Conference on Environment and Development at Rio de Janeiro: which concentrated the attention of the human race on the unplanned-for consequences of population growth made possible by the advance of scientific understanding and its application to human welfare in such areas as agricultural production, health and mechanisation.

This haemorrhaging of global biodiversity is among the most serious and challenging of these consequences. In the six seconds it takes me to complete this short sentence an area of natural forest the size of a football field disappears. That's 200,000 acres every day, 150 acres a minute, 78 million acres in a year: an area bigger than Denmark.

- ! Around 150,000 km² of rain forest a year
- ! A straight-line extrapolation of this rate means it will all be gone by 2135 AD
- ! Much higher in some areas:
- ! Madagascar has lost 93% of its forest cover
- ! The Atlantic forest coast of Brazil is 99% gone
- ! The forests of the islands of Polynesia and the Caribbean are gone altogether
- ! 30% of species will be extinct by 2050
- ! Already one-eighth of plant species are in danger of being lost

Read more <https://www.associationofcatholicpriests.ie/2018/10/the-new-view-of-creation-in-laudato-si/>

October 27 Kids out of Nauru Rally, Hyde Park, Sydney



Sisters Lynne Crilly, pbvm, Margaret Barclay pbvm with John Highfield (former ABC journalist)

Greyhound Greens' supporter

October 29 WATAC Lecture: Parliament House by Bishop Vincent Long

Bishop Long began his talk with the gospel values of equality, justice and love and the need to reframe the status quo. The institutional reputation of the church is in ruins and we need to go on a journey of radical conversion. What has occurred in the church has been a collective and systemic betrayal of the gospel. There can be no business as usual. Need to see how far we have moved the vision of Jesus. Need for prophetic reframing, reimagining and interpret the word of God for today. He quoted from Mary MacKillop: 'Never see a need without doing something about it'. Women were challenging the status quo in the church. He referred to the need to break new ground as Vatican II called us to. We cannot sit on the banks of a shrinking river but go where the river flows. The prophetic in the church today are women, the poor, the undocumented and LGBTI people. An alternative vision gives fresh hope and this is connected with channeling hope to people who are suffering. Clericalism has run its course. There has been and still is an excessive role of clergy over lay people. this no longer conveys the message of the gospel Quoting Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini he spoke of a church that is poor and personifies powerlessness. This is the only way it can be a conduit of compassion. He also spoke of the bishops who formed the Pact of the Catacombs in the final days of Vatican II when **late at night on the 16th November 1965 a group of Bishops secretly left the Vatican and met at the Domitillia Catacombs on the edge of Rome.** There they celebrated mass and signed a secret document that carried the light and hope of Vatican II. That document carried within it, a commitment to return to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, abandoning the trappings of institution and becoming once again a poor servant church for and with the people.

That document was 'The Pact of the Catacombs'

<https://www.catholicsforrenewal.org/Documents%202015/The%20Pact%20of%20the%20Catacombs.pdf> (Personal note: the only survivor of this group of bishops Bishop Luigi Bettazzi was at the

Vatican and Pax Christi International Catholic Nonviolence Initiative). In 2015 he was 92 and still quite outspoken on peace and nonviolence. **audio** Claude will seek obtain full transcript of the Bishop's talk.



Bishop Luigi Bettazzi



Bishop Vincent Long, bishop of Parramatta giving his talk and answering questions from the audience.

November 3 Contemplation and Action Seminar Pitt Street Uniting Church 10.00-4.00pm

Keynote Speakers Jarrod McKenna, Donna Mulhearn, John Owen, Susan Connelly, John O'Brien, Ceane Towers.

The aim of the day is to understand how contemplative prayer awakens a stronger commitment to work for justice and how it can support the journey for social change; explore what contemplative activism looks like; discuss what spiritual practices can nourish the inner life to avoid exhaustion, burnout and despair helping to connect to the source of love within; integrate contemplative and action to help people be better 'more whole' selves and realise a more just world.