

Convenor's Report May 2019

April 2, 2019 Affinity lecture given Professor Simon Robinson from Leeds Beckett University in the UK. Robinson is also an Anglican priest. Affinity is an intercultural and interfaith organisation seeking to create and sustain enduring relationships with people through dialogue. Their core principles are sincerity, **service**, **consultation**, **integrity**, **interdependence**, **positive action** and **balance** in what they do including organising public lectures, annual Ramadan dinners, and other cultural events that bring together different groups of society. Through these shared activities, Australian Muslims have the opportunity to develop their unique Australian identity and culture, as well as contribute to the positive development of the Australian cultural and religious landscape.

The topic of the talk by Simon Robinson was **Responsible Leadership in Politics and Religion: Diverse Communities in an Age of Anxiety**. Some notes taken:

Is there an age of anxiety? Not really. We are always in some state of anxiety
Political leadership want people to be in a state of

anxiety
fear
confusion
control
polarisation
defence
monovocal.

Cf John Paul Lederach **The Moral Imagination**

The telecommunications and transport revolution has made the world a smaller place offering both an opportunity and challenge to the major leading countries to come together to shape the world, overcome violence and create a peaceful global community. Lederach presents a powerful case for the use of the moral imagination in rising to this challenge, thus creating authentic new possibilities. The Moral Imagination is a meditation on the challenge of peacebuilding. Lederach observes that the years following the tragedy of September 11, 2001, represent a precious opportunity to address underlying cycles of violence and insecurity, locally and globally. Much exists in the conflict resolution literature about method and technique, little about art and soul. He offers us a rich fare of insights, stories and metaphors that captivate the moral imagination this world so badly needs. Lederach stands not at the end but at the midpoint of a remarkable journey of conciliation, peacebuilding and ethical reflection. Lederach goes straight to the heart of what is required to bring a change in a destructive cycle of violence, to alter an oppressive social relationship, or to understand the foundation of an intractable conflict. He uses the tools of natural science, poetry, folk lore, and physics, as well the wisdom of people who have exhibited courage in the face of violence, to consider the essence of effective peacemaking. Peacemaking is about imagining what seems impossible in the midst of conflict. It is about discerning and stretching the moment of opportunity.

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Religious leaders use the same processes
defend the **bella figura** of the church
attack homosexuals, western morality for problems
defend the institution and its practices at all costs, e.g., seal of confession,
assumption of
integrity
don't accept ambiguity, plural narratives
how do we deal with ambiguity? How do we know we have integrity?
Integrity=Identity

Jim McNamara, **The
Architecture of Listening in
Organisation**

Power of the question; a questioning culture is healthy
We have to question. Are we still the good guys?

We have too many myths about leadership? All knowing! Completely
competent! Can we justify paying the huge salaries to leaders when someone
else could surely do the job. 'I know' (Donald Trump)

Integrity
integrated self
moral identity
adhering to the bottom line; walking the talk
strength of will

Jonathan Haidt
The Righteous Mind

Accountability
who are you accountable to and what is the basis of that?

Dialogue is not the same as dialectic
dialogue involves looking in the face of the other (Emmanuel Levinas)
dialogue is always happening and we need to respond to it. Dialogue is
not a starting
gun
positive accountability is something shared.
rhetoric has to be based on dialogue
engaging difference
'in dreams begin responsibility' (Yeats)

Margaret Heffernan
The Righteous Mind.
Simon Robinson

The Spirituality of Responsibility

Emmanuel Levinas and “the face of the other”

The following quotes illuminate what Levinas means by “the face of the Other.” First, what does he mean by “face,” and by “other?”

“Other” (sometimes capitalized, sometimes not) usually translates the French word *autrui*, which means “the other person,” “someone else” (i.e., other than oneself). It is thus the personal other, the other person, whoever it is, that each of us encounters directly or experiences the traces of every day. Of course, we encounter a multiplicity of others, but Levinas more often uses the singular “other” to emphasize that we encounter others one at a time, face to face. By “face” Levinas means the human face (or in French, *visage*), but not thought of or experienced as a physical or aesthetic object. Rather, the first, usual, unreflective encounter with the face is as the living presence of another person and, therefore, as something experienced socially and ethically. “Living presence,” for Levinas, would imply that the other person (as someone genuinely other than myself) is exposed to me and expresses him or herself simply by being there as an undeniable reality that I cannot reduce to images or ideas in my head. This impossibility of capturing the other conceptually or otherwise indicates the other’s “infinity” (i.e., irreducibility to a finite [bounded] entity over which I can have power). The other person is, of course, exposed and expressive in other ways than through the literal face (e.g., through speech, gesture, action, and bodily presence generally), but the face is the most exposed, most vulnerable, and most expressive aspect of the other’s presence.

Responsibility in the Face of the Other

Responsibility that begins in seeing the face of another human being is a primary philosophical category.

Emmanuel Levinas was among the most prominent European Jewish intellectuals in the second half of the 20th century. His philosophical writings are considered an important contribution to phenomenology, and his writings on Jewish subjects, including philosophical interpretations of talmudic passages, are studied both as contributions to the philosophy of Judaism and as extensions of his more strictly philosophical works. For Levinas, one's response to other human beings as they are embodied—quite literally—in their faces is a primary philosophical category. In this excerpt from a longer dialogue, Levinas presents a brief exposition of his theory of the Other.

April 3, 2019 Australian Catholic Religious against Trafficking in Humans meeting at Edmund Rice Centre.

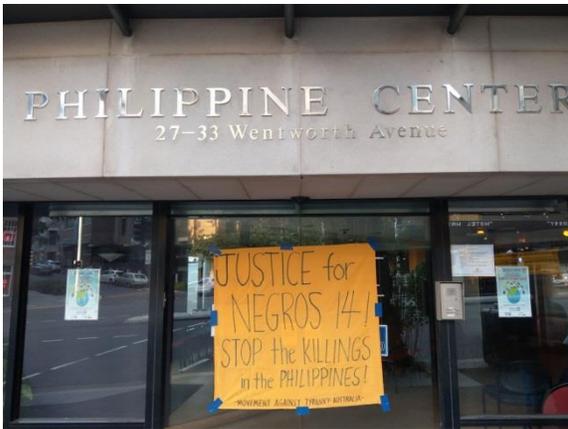
April 7, 2019 Protest against the imprisonment of former Brazilian President Lula da Silva at Town Hall



April 8, 2019 The World Muslim Communities Council from Dubai will be in Sydney on Monday 8 April 2019. The Chairman, Dr Mohammad Bashari and his Deputy, Mr Hasan Al Marzouki have requested to meet with the Council of the NSW Ecumenical Council and the Heads of Churches. Claude will go as President of the Peace and Justice Commission. It seems they want to meet with church leaders following the recent visit to Dubai of Pope Francis as well build and foster a stronger relationship between Muslims and Christians. It took place at the Office of the National Council of Churches in Australia.



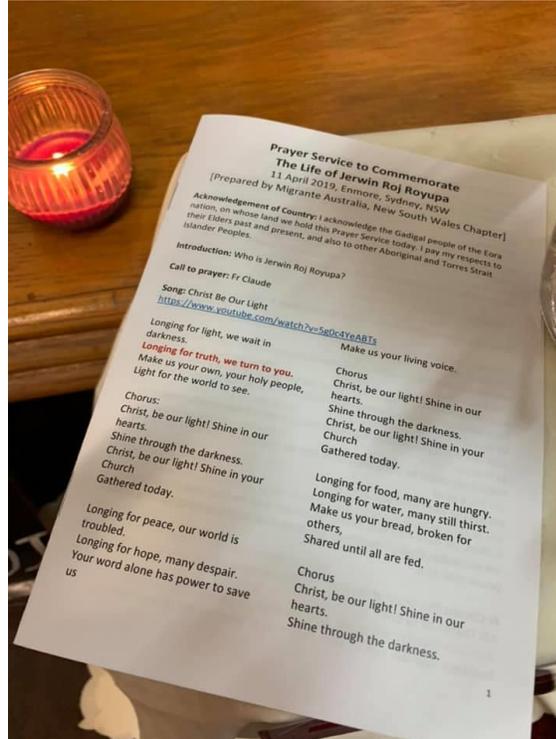
April 9, 2019 Demonstration outside the Philippine Consul-General to stop the killings of farmers, unionists, human rights defenders and lawyers



April 11, 2019 Protest outside Electro Optic Systems, Elizabeth Street, Sydney. This takes place every second Thursday of the month. The call is for them to divest from death and the war on children. This company supplies \$450 million of small arms systems to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates each of which have appalling human rights records. Save the Children representative was present and spoke. In November 2018 Save the Children estimated that 85,000 children in Yemen under the age of five have died from starvation due to the war. More than 60,000 have been killed in the last two years. Last year, a missile bought from Boeing killed 46 young boys in a school bus. In October 2018, the UN warned that 13 million people face starvation. Though Australia claims it does not allow arms sales to human rights abuses it is providing a \$36 million to EOS to market its weapons.



April 11, 2019 Prayer Service to Commemorate The Life of Jerwin Roj Royupa. held at MSC Justice and Peace Centre. This took place the day before his body was to be repatriated to the Philippines. This 21 year old died as a result of falling or being thrown out of a car at 100 kms an hour as he was being taken back to Melbourne Airport, following complaints he had made about conditions at a place of work which looked like a case of 'forced labour' or 'bondage'. None of the people at the vigil know this man but we wanted his family in the Philippines to know that 'strangers' cared about what happened to him.





April 13, 2019 Book launch at Monte Sant'Angelo Mercy College. Well attended book launch of book (about 200 people) by Bernard Collaery of Professor Clinton Fernandes' book **An Island off the Coast of Asia**. It was a very disturbing afternoon where Fernandes described Australia's pursuit of national security is embedded in its economic interests that underpin its global relationships. The desire for security equates to protecting the economic interest of powerful plays requiring cooperation with and dependence on powerful nations with similar economic interest. Two points detailed in the book: first, the simultaneous use of our security services to investigate Islamic terrorism and spy on Timorese negotiators. The fact that Australia diverted resources and personnel away from terrorist concerns in the early 2000's towards an operation for financial gain in Timor Leste raised major question, especially when carried out under cover of a humanitarian project; and second, comparing Australian and Norwegian approaches to maritime resources. Australia's continental shelf was mapped at government expense and the finding handed over to oil and gas companies. The recompense to Australian coffers from the largest gas producing areas was \$27 billion between 1984-2017. The Australian public absorbed the costs and the risks, yet corporations received the profits. Very much smaller Norwegian maritime areas were mapped and mined by government-owned companies, netter the much smaller Norwegian nations \$1.2 trillion. The people of Norway shouldered the costs and the risks, but also reaped the profits.

Further Reading: Australia accused of 'siphoning' millions in Timor-Leste oil revenue

[Helen Davidson *The Guardian* April 16, 2019](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/apr/16/australia-accused-of-siphoning-millions-in-timor-leste-oil-revenue)

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/apr/16/australia-accused-of-siphoning-millions-in-timor-leste-oil-revenue>

Susan Connelly Kafka in Australia: the trial of Witness K *Eureka Street* April 6, 2019

https://www.eurekastreet.com.au/article/kafka-in-australia-the-trial-of-witness-k?fbclid=IwAR1UYNB5IEgLYW7Kp-QB7oHVPFhyNpJ_e5slG0YGvvUGDN90RWSqdY2WLOo



Prof. Clinton Fernandes

April 14, 2019 Palm Sunday Rally and March, Belmore Park to Victoria Park, Sydney. Great to have Pax Christi members present, Maggie Galley, Gary Wellsmore, Peter Griffin, Gill Burrows, Marita McInerney, Richard Farrell, Clare Maguire and Frank Vavasour. I hope I did not miss anyone.





Videos of a few of the speakers at rally on the **Palm Sunday Facebook** page too. if anyone wants to have another look or to share them:

Craig Foster

<https://www.facebook.com/PalmSundayRallySydney/videos/vl.283094425977097/2324419701181148/?type=1>

Shukufa Tahiri

<https://www.facebook.com/PalmSundayRallySydney/videos/vl.283094425977097/434386383974963/?type=1>

Rev John Barr (and Fr Shenouda and Fr Claude)

<https://www.facebook.com/PalmSundayRallySydney/videos/vl.283094425977097/2395581287392426/?type=1>

Bronwyn Penrith

<https://www.facebook.com/PalmSundayRallySydney/videos/vl.283094425977097/349954855631189/?type=1>

The whole set is at

https://www.facebook.com/pg/PalmSundayRallySydney/videos/?ref=page_internal

April 18, 2019 Inter-congregational Voice on Climate Change

Claude informed the group that Kateia Ta Kabwebwe has put a recently released document **Enter the Dragon** on the Pacific Climate Watch website. The publication concerns Australia and China's agenda in the Pacific. Claude also expressed the hope that Kateia would also teach him how to post items on the website.

Report on the ongoing THE CLIMATE CHANGE IS NOT A JOKE PHOTO CAMPAIGN: POSSIBILITIES FOR DELEGATION TO MEET WITH POLITICIANS IN CANBERRA IN 2019
Action: This will need to be discussed more in the next meeting after the Federal Election

Reports: **Report on the Holy See at the United Nations** put out by Catholics for Human Rights challenging the Holy See at the United Nations in that it has violated treaties that it has ratified.

JS also shared to the group on the UN conference she had attended in March. She was sharing on one of the conference event based on 'Why gender advocates should care about climate finance and Green Climate Fund. Discussion also as to whether the Holy See has a right to have its status at the United Nations given its role in colluding with countries such as Iran, etc on women's rights, etc.

LC pointed out that Australia is putting up its report on his human rights to the Human Rights in Geneva and the group to think about putting together a joint statement and what should be in the statement.

April 21, 2019 Easter Sunday Sri Lanka



April 27, 2019 International Day of Mourning 2019, Reflection Park, Darling Harbour

The International Workers' Memorial Day service is a time to reflect and remember the thousands of workers who are killed in their workplace each year. This special open service is an opportunity for all workers, political leaders, employers, religious and civic leaders in our local community to take the time to reflect on the significance of work health and safety in 2019.

April 29, 2019 Signed on behalf of Pax Christi Australia to **Public Statement to the Third Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)** Print copies will be distributed at the May meeting for those interested.

Support for Australia to sign and ratify the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is strong and only growing. Many people are unaware of the new Treaty and its significance. The current Australian Government has not only opposed the Treaty, but is now misrepresenting it.

ICAN is producing a detailed 80-page report setting out in one place the compelling case for Australia to join the Treaty.

The report will showcase a diversity of voices including experts, faith groups, unions, First Nations people impacted by nuclear testing and the Australian Red Cross as well as the former President of the Australian Human Rights Commission, Professor Gillian Triggs and former Justice of the High Court of Australia, the Hon Michael Kirby AC CMG.



April 30, 2019 Launch of Palestine Israel Ecumenical Network (PIEN) Boycott, Divestments and Sanctions (BDS) policy and campaign at St James' Church, Sydney. Launched by Professor Emeritus Stuart Rees OAM and Assoc. Professor Dr. Peter Slezak (UNSW).

This small organisation (PIEN) has heard the calls of Palestinians and Israelis who have and continue to work for justice and peace. It has adopted a non-violent action against companies (and at the launch Hewlett-Packard [HP] was singled out for its participation in the Israeli prison complete against Palestinians. It is deeply embedded in the Israeli military occupation of Palestine through equipping the Israeli military with the technology infrastructure used to maintain the systems of apartheid and oppression) and other entities which, directly or indirectly, support Israel's occupation of Palestinian land and its blockade of the Gaza Strip, in violation of international law. This method was successfully used against supporters of Apartheid in South Africa.

More information can be found here - <https://pien.org.au/2019/04/10/an-invitation-to-attend-our-bds-policy-campaign-launch/>

Professor Slezak said he was always amazed that such a small movement can get so much attention from the very powerful Jewish lobby. He said that we will 'win' because we speak the **truth, justice and act with compassion**. He also said that everything he has learned about Israel and Palestine needs to be overturned. The story is one of deceit. It has nothing to do with national security. The Jewish people from Europe and USA have no right to take the land that belongs to the Palestinians. There is no equal or level playing field in this struggle. Stuart Rees said that we cannot be neutral for this reason, quoting from Martin Luther King. Neutrality in matters of justice means collaboration.



Peter Slezak



Stuard Rees



Lee Rhiannon



Rev Ray Williamson



May 1, 2019 Letter to Hon Anthony Albanese on Palestinian rights (Federal Member for Grayndler) and political candidates for the electorate.

Dear Mr Albanese

I am very concerned at the plight of Palestinian people who do not have freedom or self-determination. As they commemorate the Nakba or Catastrophe on May 15 we should use this day to draw attention to the situation in Gaza and West Bank especially but including all Palestinian people.

I have just come into your electorate. My concern is that Australia has not and is not doing enough to help bring an end to the 52 years of occupation and work towards peace in the Middle East.

70 years ago Australia formally voted in support of Israel's unilateral declaration of Statehood. The Palestinian people have been there long before and have not had the opportunity to have a state of their own but are forced to live under a brutal military occupation. They live as second class citizens in their own land or as refugees throughout the Middle East and beyond. Australia cannot not be neutral under these circumstances. That is only to collaborate in a gross injustice. Australia must act to support freedom and dignity for the Palestinian people. Australian policy must act decisively in support of Palestinians being able to live in freedom and dignity.

I call upon you as the representative for this electorate to support actions that will lead to an end of the occupation of the Palestinian Territories and respect for human rights. Palestinian self-determination must accompany statehood. I am very unhappy and deeply concerned when our Government does not stand up and call out aggressive actions against Palestinians, particularly civilians, and the racist policies that underpin them.

Before the coming election, are you able to indicate your willingness to:

Compiled by Claude Mostowik msc,
Director, Missionaries of the Sacred Heart Justice and Peace Centre, Erskineville NSW
Convenor, Pax Christi Australia [NSW]
President, Pax Christi Australia

1. Help progress Australia joining 138 other countries and formally Recognising Palestine, giving them diplomatic equality with other nations;
2. Speak out against Israeli human rights abuses, including expansion of settlements being built on stolen Palestinian land, the blockade of Gaza, and the traumatic treatment of Palestinian children by the Israeli military;
3. If you travel to the region, commit to spending as much time in Palestine as in Israel;
4. Commit to participating in the Parliamentary Friends of Palestine group to learn more.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read my email, I look forward to your response

I might add that I conduct monthly meetings at my residence for Pax Christi Australia members. Pax Christi is part of an international Catholic Peace Movement based in Brussels which has had a long standing interest in and involvement with people concerned for peace and justice in Israel and Palestine

May 2, 2019 Palm Sunday Committee **debrief** on Palm Sunday Rally and March

May 2, 2019 Australian Anti-Bases Campaign Coalition

Report on press conference April 29 for SIPRI release at NSW Parliament House. DD will contact Save the Children, Amnesty, Human Rights Watch and MAPW (Medical Association to Prevent War) and 2 planned actions

Coming up

May 5, 2019 May Day (May 1) Rally and Social Events at Hyde Park A moment to reflect on the dignity of workers and work for a more just society that always places the rights of labor before the rights of capital.