

Special Interest Articles:

- Health and Justice – Money is the driver
- One Degree Matters – Our wild weather.
- Lack of Leadership – Jacinta vs. Scott.



Health and Justice

The world is at risk of losing effective antibiotics altogether, as the big pharmaceutical companies abandon the expensive pursuit of developing new strains of the drug, desperately needed to replace drugs made ineffective because of microbial resistance.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) warned, last month, that declining private investment and lack of innovation in the development of new antibiotics are undermining efforts to combat drug-resistant infections.

The perverse reason? There is no real money in it. It costs billions to develop new strains, and much of that is soaked up by repeated failures. The result of the cost of research is that once a new drug hits the market, hospitals can't afford to pay for them.

Antibiotics – ordinarily taken over a number of days – aren't money-spinners like cancer drugs, and treatments for

chronic ailments like arthritis. Smaller companies that have stepped into the breach are going bankrupt, discouraging further research and development.

Drug resistant diseases already cause at least 700,000 deaths globally each year, a figure that could increase to 10 million deaths globally per year by 2050 under the most alarming scenario if no action is taken. The economic damage of uncontrolled antimicrobial resistance could be comparable to the shocks experienced during the 2008-2009 global financial crisis as a result of dramatically increased health care expenditures; impact on food and feed production, trade and livelihoods; and increased poverty and inequality.

The WHO noted that only government intervention might save the day. Big Pharmas don't produce drugs from any humanitarian motives, but to make profits.

J.R.Sanchez CP

Contents:

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Health and Justice | 1 |
| Light Pollution | 1 |
| JPIC Happenings | 2 |
| One Degree Matters | 2 |
| The Forgotten War | 3 |
| True Christian Leadership | 3 |
| Lack of Leadership | 4 |
| Moltmann & Rising Nationalism | 4 |

Light Pollution

Insect populations collapse have been reported in Germany and Puerto Rico, and the first global scientific review, published in February of last year, said widespread declines threatened to cause a catastrophic collapse of nature's ecosystems, which in turn would have devastating consequences for life on this planet.

A significant but overlooked driver of the rapid decline of insect populations, is light pollution. Artificial light at night can affect every aspect of insects' lives from luring moths to their deaths around bulbs, to spotlighting insect prey for rats and toads, to obscuring the mating signals of fireflies.

Light pollution, for example, affects dung beetles, which use starlight to navigate. For us light pollution is a shame as we can't see the night stars, but for a beetle it is literally life and death.

Light pollution by itself is not the only driver, but taken in combination with habitat loss, chemical pollution, invasive species, and climate change, is driving insect declines. And the thing is that, unlike the other drivers, light pollution is relatively easy to prevent by switching off unnecessary lights and using proper shades.

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JPIC Happenings

Happy New Year to all our readers and welcome to our first quarterly newsletter for 2020. My year has started with our celebration at St. Steven's Cathedral on Friday night, 7th of February, with the feast of St. Bakhita. I organised this on behalf of ACRATH to promote awareness of human trafficking and modern day slavery. I organised such a mass last year, and this year Archbishop Mark Coleridge was again ready to support our efforts as principle celebrant. His sermon was an inspirational call to action to end the scourge of slavery in the modern world. We were also again graced by the presence of the Sudanese choir, who were invited to support our cause, as Bakhita is also patroness of Sudan. The Canossian sisters, who claim Bakhita as one of their own, also came and supported the mass.



It fell a bit short of what I had hoped for, however. I had met with the Sudanese community pastoral committee



Bottled water companies don't produce water, they produce plastic bottles.

(The Green Hub)



One Degree Matters

Since the Industrial Revolution, when humans began burning coal in large quantities, our planet has warmed by one degree. One tiny degree! It doesn't sound like much, but in Australia that one tiny degree fuels hotter days that are many degrees above normal summer temperatures. Penrith was recently the hottest place on Earth, peaking at 48.9°C. And these hot days are not just one-offs, but blend into weeks of heatwaves that have dried our continent, ripening it for the horrific fires that have burned in eastern Australia for months.

There are few climate deniers amongst the people who have lost their homes, communities and livelihoods. There are few climate deniers at the business end of a fire hose. For at least 33 people and more than a billion native animals, one degree hasn't been survivable.

So can you imagine a future with more than

last year and there it was decided that this would be their primary celebration, that they would bus their people in and bring their own food to share. But none of this eventuated and only their choir attended like they did last year. I will have to follow this up to see if we can improve next year.

Our other big news to share is to congratulate Peter Gardiner CP on his new direction. This year he will do a 3 month program at the University of Technology, Sydney, in teaching English as a second language. Peter has already been teaching english to immigrants as a volunteer. But with these qualifications under his belt, he can respond to the call from other entities in PASPAC to spend time in countries like Vietnam and Indonesia teaching english. This would be give him a base from which to do other volunteer work for JPIC and organise immersion experiences.

J.R.Sanchez, CP .

three degrees of global warming? That is where our planet is headed if countries like Australia don't take urgent climate action.

The United Nation has calculated that if every country fulfils its current pledges under the Paris Agreement (and some, including Australia, are not on track to do so), the globe will warm by 3.2 degrees. Instead, Prime Minister Scott Morrison is encouraging Australians to adapt to the 'new normal.'

Climate scientists warn global climate pollution must decline by 50% by 2030 to avoid three degrees of warming. Australia's targets are nowhere near that. Australia is in the top 20 biggest polluters in the world and we rocket up to 5th if you count the pollution our coal and gas exports contribute. One degree matters!

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The Forgotten War

Since the pull out of the US, the war in Syria has become for us the forgotten war. So much is this the case that Pope Francis has again highlighted the plight of refugees, particularly women and children, fleeing the violence and appealed to world leaders to help.

"Painful news continues to arrive from the north-west of Syria, in particular on the conditions of many women and children, of people forced to flee due to military escalation," said Pope Francis after his weekly Angelus in St. Peter's Square last Sunday.

According to the United Nations, 500,000 people have been displaced since the first of December, with 8 in 10 of them being women and children. Turkey

already accommodates more than three million Syrian refugees.

The latest crisis is due to the Syrian offensive into the rebel stronghold of Idlib. People who are displaced like this become particularly vulnerable to human trafficking and modern day slavery.

"I renew my heartfelt appeal," Pope Francis said, "to the international community and to all the actors involved to make use of diplomatic instruments, dialogue and negotiations, in compliance with International Humanitarian Law, to safeguard the life and fate of civilians. Let us pray of this beloved and tormented Syria."

From The Tablet



True Christian Leadership

Sitting off St. Peter's Square next to the Vatican is a beautiful 19th century palace called the Palazzo Migliori, named after the family who donated it to the Roman Catholic Church. It has served as the headquarters for an order of religious women called the Calasanzianes, who occupied the building for 70 years, using it to help and care for young single mothers.

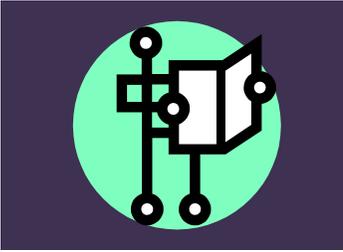
The religious sisters relocated and so vacated the building last year. One option was to turn the building into a hotel, as it's just off St. Peter's Square, where popes deliver sermons to thousands of worshippers. The location is also very popular with tourists who pay hundreds of dollars to stay close to it. It could have commanded top dollar if it were turned into a hotel, but Pope Francis had other ideas. After the building was renovated in November, Pope Francis opened its doors to the homeless.

Mario Brezza, 53 years old, who had his leg amputated because of a serious circulatory disease, and living on a monthly disability allowance of \$300, is among the 50 or so homeless men and women who now sleep in the



palace's 16 bedrooms. He told NBC News, "This place feels more like home. I have my own bed, room and bathroom. It's so different from the dormitories I have tried until now, where sometimes you feel like an animal in a crowded stable." It is so refreshing to have Christian leadership that truly practices what it preaches. Do we get too caught up with balancing the books and forget about what we should be concerned about?

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Lack of Leadership

With the uncertainty that we have lived with for some time caused by the never ending war on terror, the unpredictable presidential style of Donald Trump and the fear of a Climate Change disaster, people are looking for real leadership to steer us safely through these turbulent times. No where has this been highlighted more than in our reaction to how Jacinda Ardern responded to the Christchurch massacre and how Scott Morrison dealt with the bushfire crisis.

With Jacinda Arderns we saw a very human and compassionate response to people experiencing fear and pain. It appeared she had forgotten herself and that all that mattered to her were those suffering grief, horror and loss. She communicated this with respectful gestures such as covering her head and with public comments such as, "you are us," that convinced the Moslem community of Christchurch that they were welcomed and valued as New Zealanders. The people of Australia warmed to her leadership style such that I lost count of the number of

people who said to me, "Why can't she be our prime minister?"

While no one denies that Scott Morrison deserves his holidays, his failure to return immediately gave the impression of a lack of concern. His manner and apologetic style all communicated a self focus, a concern to save his image, rather than a genuine concern for the pain of others. While he has responded with financial help, again the perception was one of hesitancy due to concern as to how such spending might affect the budget, and his re-electability. That is not to say that he didn't feel compassion, but rather that, if he did, he failed to communicate it.

At such times, when we feel frightened, overwhelmed, lost, we look for a leader that we feel really cares about us, can hold us together, and can reassure us that we'll get through this. We look for a leader who will really listen to us and treat our fears seriously, however irrational they are. This is where Jacinda succeeded and Scott failed.

J. R. Sanchez, CP .

Moltmann & Rising Nationalism

Last December, the distinguished German theologian, Jürgen Moltmann, spoke of his concern about the resurgence of nationalism around the world. Moltmann himself served in the Hitler Youth as a boy and was a WWII POW at the time of his conversion to Christianity. So he has a personal perspective on the evils of nationalism. He called the new wave of nationalism taking root in many countries a 'setback for humanity.' "Humanity precedes nationality," he said in a lecture to students at the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, Switzerland.

Moltmann, now 93 years old, spoke candidly about growing up under the extreme nationalism of Nazi Germany and the impact this had on his own family. He recalled that, when Hitler came to power in 1933, he was seven years old. "My larger family was divided between anti-Hitler socialists and pro-Hitler Nazis."

In 1937 his father was told to either join the Nazi party or lose his job as a teacher. His father joined the party to save his family and when the War broke out volunteered for the army, remaining at odds with Nazism. Moltmann, himself, was drafted into the Army along with his entire school class at just 16. After the war ended, when he returned to Germany, he felt lost over the things he'd learned about Auschwitz and the killing of German soldiers by the SS.

"Since then I have been convinced there is no fatherland in dictatorship," he said. He challenged Christians to reject nationalistic ideas saying, "The church of Christ is present in all the people on earth and cannot become a 'national religion.'" "The church of Christ ecumenically embraces the whole inhabited earth," he said, "She is not a tribal religion, nor a Western religion, nor a white religion, but the church of all humanity."

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