

Special Interest Articles:

- Which Future – An opportunity for change
- The Ballad of Dunny Roll – A social commentary.
- COVID19's Wildlife Impact – Widespread effect of the pandemic.



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Which Future?

Concern over avoiding a recession is high on the Government's agenda, now that it appears we have avoided the worst of the pandemic. That is why we need to be vigilant about the path proposed to take us back to economic recovery. The coal lobby are using the COVID19 health crisis to lobby for huge corporate tax cuts for their fossil fuel empires. But propping up the coal industry with tax handouts will only supercharge the climate crisis, an issue that has been put on hold due to the Corona virus pandemic, and line the pockets of wealthy fossil fuel executives like Gina Rinehart.

With many in our communities losing their jobs, and a generation of young people being locked out of the workforce, now more than ever we need solutions that invest in our communities. Creating a 'Clean Jobs Guarantee' providing well-paid, low emissions, public sector jobs for every worker who wants one, is how we can build our communities back after last summer's devastating bushfire crisis and

Worst Bleaching

Australia's summer this year will go down as the moment when human-caused climate change struck hard. First came the drought, then the bushfires, and now a bout of coral bleaching on the Great Barrier Reef – the third in just 5 years. Unfortunately this bleaching is severe and reported as the most widespread we have ever recorded.

Regional coral bleaching is caused by spikes in sea temperatures during unusually hot summers. The first recorded mass bleaching event along the Great Barrier Reef occurred in 1998, which at the time was labled the hottest year on record. But since then we've seen 4 more mass bleachings with more

the current health crisis.

The need to create an economy that works for all of us has never been clearer. And we know the coming months our government will spend billions in economic stimulus packages. We have a choice: we can either let our politicians give massive handouts to fossil fuel corporations or we can put pressure on them to put the needs of our communities first.

There is a lot of work to be done in bringing our economy back from its hibernation. There are a lot of people who could be employed to do it, from publicly owned clean energy projects, to properly staffing our health and social security services, and providing vital care work to communities.

So which future do we want? Let's not waste this opportunity to build a better, cleaner future for the coming generations.

Ray Sanchez CP

temperatures broken. This year, February had the highest monthly sea surface temperatures ever recorded on the Reef since the Bureau of Meteorology'd records began in 1900.

Bleaching isn't necessarily fatal for coral, and it affects some species more than others. But when bleaching is severe, many corals die. Compared to the 4 previous bleaching events, there are fewer unbleached or lightly bleached reefs this year than in the previous events. Without urgent action it's clear our coral reef will not survive our emissions.

J. R. Sanchez, CP



JPIC Happenings

The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly restricted what we've been up to of late as the JPIC committee.

Peter Gardiner CP, who is a member of the Passionist Community at Marrickville in Sydney, is one of 2 members who are young enough and able to go out to do the shopping for their community. Because of the number of members who are in the vulnerable category for the virus, due to age or health related issues, Peter has had to put his volunteering work on hold so as not to risk contamination and bringing the disease home.

I too have been homebound, setting up a strict going out policy so that the other member of my community and I stay well. The restrictions on gatherings mean that the monthly ACRATH meeting has not taken place, though this week we will try to catch up with a zoom meeting.

Of course there are always online

petitions to sign and campaigns to support, but the energy to do much of this is also put on hold until we see our way out the other end of this uncertain period of lockdown. Donations from our committee too are on hold given our ability to earn money has also dried up with no public gatherings for presentations or ministry.

My work has continued with the monthly JPIC blog article and our quarterly newsletter. A recent project was an organised letter writing campaign by ACRATH who wrote to the Fair Work Ombudsman regarding a case of 22 workers from Vanuatu who were clearly exploited under the Seasonal Workers Programme by their labour hire company. The reply I received acknowledged the letter and the pursuit of compensation payment to these workers following non-payment by the local hire company.

J.R.Sanchez, CP



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

(The Green Hub)



Plastic Empire Strikes Back

In late March, the New York Times reported on how the plastic bag industry was seeking to capitalize on the pandemic and undo state and city bans on single-use plastics like bags and straws. In the USA, unlike Australia, some stores refused to accept reusable bags, etc., for fear of contamination, and the plastic industry saw their opportunity. It is a reminder to us that there are forces seeking to preserve the throwaway culture that Pope Francis has urged the world to abandon.

Economics, of course, are the major factor. Plastic production is backed by major oil and chemical associations. Seeing their profits threatened by a growing ecological consciousness, they can be expected to fight back when an opening appears.

Today, approximately 8.8 million tons of plastic enter the ocean each year, and upwards of 26 million tons of plastic enter landfills in the US alone. This polluting of

the environment threatens both biodiversity and human health, with more and more plastic particles entering into our food chain.

The disposable versus reusable debate existed well before the novel coronavirus began spreading around the globe. Prior to the pandemic, with the bushfire crisis and Greta Thunberg's media prominence as a voice for the young and the environment, these issues were front and centre of our consciousness. The current crisis has shifted this out of our immediate focus. But as we begin loosening restrictions, the question of the shape this debate takes comes into view. How it plays out post-pandemic will likely have a significant effect on whether the planet leaves the throwaway culture in its past, as well.

J.R.Sanchez CP



COVID-fueled Racism

Unfortunately, COVID-19 has given some Australians an excuse to be racist. A number of reports on the media have shown Chinese or Asian Australians being insulted or even physically abused on the streets because of the coronavirus origins in the Wuhan province in China. For Asian Australians racist slurs are experienced all too frequently, such that "you get used to feel a very minor kind of racism," said Ms Li, who emigrated to Australia from China when she was 15. She was disappointed to experience coronavirus fueled racism in a country she now called home. "It's very hard to say if I feel safer now, because every time when I leave the shop, I still need to look around and make sure there are no suspicious things happening.

A survey launched by community group Asian-Australians Alliance has collected some 300 racist incidents against Asian Australians since it was launched on April 2. Most respondents said these incidents were linked to COVID-19. Of those who reported a racist incident in the survey, more than 40% of incidents occurred on a public street, 22% occurred in supermarkets or grocery stores, 15% on public transport and 12% in shopping centres. Many of these people surveyed stated that they or their parents are fearful to go outside to take a walk or to walk to their local supermarkets to pick up some items because of the racism. The survey also revealed 2/3rds of incidents involved verbal or written racial slurs, 17% involved verbal threats and 13% physical intimidation such as being pushed or punched.



From The ABC News.

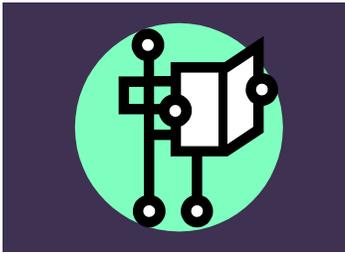
The Ballad of Dunny Roll

The year was 2020, early March, or thereabouts;
off the back of quite a summer plagued by bushfires and droughts.
So the nation was exhausted, many folks weren't thinking straight,
which goes some way towards explaining #ToiletPaperGate.
It started with a virus, some say China was the donor.
They called it COVID-19 but we called it My Corona.
And we saw the illness spreading and the cruise ships quarantined.
And we sanitized our fingers as we lined up to be screened.
Then in amongst the panic, someone headed down to Coles
and loaded up their trolley full of toilet paper rolls.
We'll never know who did it, what their motive was or why.
Or what brand of roll they hoarded, was it scented or two-ply?
All we know is in that moment, when they took it from the shelf,
they unleashed a chain reaction as a nation shat itself.
Now we've faced wars and cyclones, we've survived them all as one.
But a toilet paper shortage? Well it made us come undone.
For the people started hoarding all the last remaining sheets.
There were punch ons in the aisles, there was panic in the streets.
"Me crack's in need of wiping!" Someone cried in desperation.
What else can I bloody use to solve this situation?
Some stooped to using gum leaves. Others left it on the floor.
Many wiped with plastic bags and returned them to the store.
While others rocked on the verandah with a shotgun fully manned.
To protect their precious stock, they'd rather die than use their hand.
And the cheeky bidet owners with their derrieres unhurt?
Well they rented out their bathrooms, \$20 for a squirt.

But the greatest single irony throughout this sordid farce,
you get Corona in your nose and lungs, not shooting out
your arse.
So we'll never know when faced with a pandemic-level
slaughter,
Why we spent our cash on poo tickets instead of food and
water.
'Cause history will tell you how the virus was contained.
But the rush on toilet paper? That can never be explained.
And I wonder if the Anzacs were infected by some jerks
who'd fight over a dunny roll instead of fighting Turks.
'Cause it seems to me it could just be a true blue Aussie
trait,
to panic in a crisis and steal bog roll from your mates.

This poem, penned by comedian Sammy J. in the
style of Banjo Patterson, while satirical and funny,
perhaps has something important to say in terms of
social commentary. Civilization is a veneer. When
threatened, our regression to selfish and violent
behaviour is reached all too quickly. How far have
we really progressed as human beings?

J.R.Sanchez CP



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Faith and Ecology

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has noted that the coronavirus pandemic is more than a health crisis. It is a human crisis which is attacking societies at the core. To tackle it, policy makers will need the support of scientists, experts, and society at large, including religious leaders, scholars and communities.

The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) is partnering with others, within and outside the UN, to get people, including adherents of the world's religions, to revisit our relationship with nature and rebuild a more environmentally responsible world.

25 years ago, religion and ecology were not a linked field of study, nor a force for transformation. But after a series of conferences on religion and ecology in the late 1990's at Harvard's Center for the Study of World Religions (organised by Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim) things changed. Programs and courses on religion and ecology are being taught in colleges, universities, seminaries and secondary

schools around the world.

The Yale Forum has been a leader in this, and Forum directors, Tucker and Grim, observed that even before COVID19 we saw a renewed focus on humans' relationship with, and dependence on, the environment, in churches, synagogues, temples, and mosques around the world. Awareness is growing, as are calls for environmental justice for people and the planet.

Every major religion has statements on the importance of ecological protection and ecojustice. Together with UNEP's Faith for Earth initiative, the Yale Forum is inspiring people to preserve, protect, and restore ecosystems and biodiversity, engage in dialogue, and promote action for change within religious communities in partnership with scientists and policy makers.

Faith for Earth coordinator, Iayd Abumoghli, said, "Healthy, functioning ecosystems and environmental law are central to a post-COVID world."

Yale Forum on Religion & Ecology

COVID19's Wildlife Impact

While the media have promoted the positive effect of COVID19 on the environment and wildlife, thanks to the decline of human activity with the lockdown, in safari parks and nature reserves around the world, this is far to simplistic a view. Most nature reserves rely heavily on money from tourism, both to run the parks, and more critically to fund conservation and anti-poaching efforts.

Many countries have imposed lockdowns on international travel and that means that revenues for wildlife reserves has all but dried up. Incidents of poaching and killing of wildlife for their tusks have increased, with no doubt that this is poverty driven due to the pandemic and the economic shutdown. Poaching for meat is also on the rise as hunting becomes cheaper than buying meat.

The problem is two-fold. Lack of money

coming into parks means that rangers may be laid off, or face fuel and other shortages, making it harder for them to do their jobs. In addition, the wider economic slowdown makes poaching more attractive for desperate local people. The economic shutdown creates more poverty, creates better reason for a local person to think about poaching an animal, because they are hungry. They don't have any alternative income currently.

In India, the same is true and has put the already endangered Bengal tiger at greater risk. India's parks and tiger reserves are shuttered to the outside world, but millions of migrant workers, who had flocked to the cities for work, have been forced to return back to their villages without work or income. The temptation for them will be a real threat as the weeks of lockdown continue.

J.R.Sanchez, CP.