

Committee Desk 0481 047 390

Special Interest Articles:

- Roe vs. Wade – Will it address the problem?
- JPIC Happenings – Peter’s new pilgrimages to Vietnam and Cambodia.
- The EV Holdup – Why we’re slow to switch to Electric Vehicles.

Contents:

Unseen Danger	1
Roe vs. Wade	1
JPIC Happenings	2
Russian War Crimes	2
The EV Holdup	3
Forced Marriage Win	3
Updating the Reef	4
Looming Food Crisis	4



Unseen Danger

In the first 3 weeks of Putin’s war, over 500 children were recorded crossing into Romania all by themselves. Alone and vulnerable, they join thousands of unaccompanied children already in Europe who are traumatised by war, now living in squalid camps or on the streets, and easy prey for **traffickers**.

As droves of Ukranian women and children crossed borders into neighboring countries during the first days of the war there was little infrastructure in place to meet them in their host countries.

In Beregsurany, Hungary, volunteers and locals showed up to the border to help in any way they could, but soon the scene became chaotic and volunteers from local organizations began seeing ‘suspicious people’ approaching women and children offering rides. When representatives from the volunteer organisations approached them to get

details, they wouldn’t provide them.

Since awareness of the threat of human trafficking grew, the border was closed to individuals crossing by foot. Instead, the organizations arranged for registered buses to pick up refugees at the border and take them directly to a refugee camp that was set up less than a mile away, where police and volunteers were on site to monitor who is coming and going.

Ilias Chatzis, who leads a UN team dedicated to countering human trafficking, said that this is the direction most border countries have now taken as awareness of possible predators has spread. “War creates trafficking,” Chatzis said, “because it creates the conditions where people are vulnerable, have lost everything and are fleeing death and destruction.”

J.R.Sanchez C.P.

Roe vs. Wade

Featuring on the news this week has been the leaked information that the US Supreme Court was poised to overturn the decision of Roe vs. Wade, made on the 22nd of January, 1973, that ruled that the US Constitution protects a pregnant woman’s liberty to choose to have an abortion without excessive government restriction.

The draft majority opinion to strike down the Roe vs. Wade case written by judge Samuel Alito, was take as a very encouraging sign by Sydney Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP and other leading Australian Catholics. “While the decision will not end the scourge of abortion in the United States,” said Archbishop Fisher, “it will give each state the opportunity to

prohibit or at least restrict this horrific practice that has claimed the lives of more than 60 million unborn children since Roe vs. Wade was decided.”

While I am anti-abortion, I do not think criminalizing abortions addresses the causes. Having access to abortions is not what causes them. What causes them are: a lack of comprehensive sex education; inaccessible health care; violence against women; religious shame and exclusion; familial rejection or coercion; and workplace inequalities including but not limited to barriers for advancement, disparities in pay and lack of paid parental leave or child care. Also, criminalising abortion demonises the women involved. There are no consequences for the men.

J. R. Sanchez, CP

JPIC Happenings

Finally we have some movement from the JPIC committee, initiated by Peter Gardiner CP. Now that COVID restrictions have eased and international travel is back on the cards, Peter is organising trips of volunteers back to Vietnam and Cambodia.

The first trip will take place from the 27th of December 2022 to the 5th of January 2023 to Siem Reap, Cambodia to join forces with Volunteer Building Cambodia, to build 2 houses for poorer families in that region. The second trip will be going to Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) in Vietnam to serve the poor and disadvantaged from the 8th to the 19th of January 2023.

The cost of either trip will be \$1500 per person, twin share, or a single supplement will be charged. The cost includes accommodation, the cost of building 2 houses, team meals and expenses for team build, food and household goods for the families if you choose Cambodia; or accommodation experience, or donations to the various organisations we partner with,

team meals, expenses and travel to our partner organisations for Vietnam, plus a group cap and polo shirt for both trips. The cost does not however cover travel to and from Cambodia or Vietnam, travel insurance, visas, and associated costs of travel and personal expenses.

For further information or to support this work, please email Peter Gardiner at cppilg2023@gamil.com. Expressions of interest will close on June 12th, 2022.

As the volunteers will be working with minors and vulnerable adults, it is also a requirement to present a police clearance or working with children documentation.

You can follow preparations on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/VietnamPilg23> / and <https://www.facebook.com/CambPilg23/>

Thank you Peter for relaunching what is truly a lifechanging experience.

J.R.Sanchez, CP



*I we have no peace,
it is because we have
forgotten that we
belong to each other.
(Mother Teresa)*

Russian War Crimes

Donatella Rovera, Amnesty International's senior crisis response adviser, told a news conference in Kyiv that they have documented war crimes in the Ukraine, including the wilful killing of civilians by Russian forces when they occupied an area northeast of Kyiv in February and March.

Rovera reported that civilians have also suffered abuse such as reckless shootings and torture at the hands of Russian forces in the early stages of the invasion and that, "these are not isolated incidents. These are very much part of a pattern wherever Russian forces were in control of a town or village."

Russia has denied its forces committed war crimes. Ukrainian authorities and the International Criminal Court are investigating alleged war crimes, but Amnesty International is the latest human

rights group to document alleged war crimes, including in the town of Bucha, where Ukrainian authorities say more than 400 civilians were killed.

Amnesty said it had documented 22 cases of unlawful killings by Russian forces, "most of which were apparent extrajudicial executions," in Bucha and nearby areas. Russian air raids that hit 8 residential buildings on March 1 and 2 in the town of Borodyanka, killing at least 40 civilians, were "disproportionate and indiscriminate, and apparent war crimes. Russian forces cannot credibly claim to have been unaware that civilians were living in the targeted buildings."

Will justice ever be done? It is hard to imagine any vehicle that would have the power to bring it about. But it is important that we do not forget.

J.R.Sanchez CP



The EV Holdup

Australia now has the key ingredients for widespread electric vehicle (EV) adoption – infrastructure, a variety of models and government incentives – yet plug-in vehicles only accounted for 1.9% of new car sales last year. Compare this to the 4% market share in the US, 15% market share in China and 19% market share in Europe. Norway, the world leader, had more than 86% of new cars sold last year as plug-ins.

It appears that lack of information rather than lack of infrastructure is to blame for what is stopping Australians from embracing Electric Vehicles, according to CarsGuide's new energy vehicle specialist Tom White. "Things like charging, efficiency, how much range you'll actually get and where you can charge up are really misunderstood."

A recurring theme in Australia and globally is that electric cars supposedly can't drive far enough to meet people's everyday needs. The truth is that the longest-range electric

car sold in Australia, the Tesla Model S, has a range of 652km on a single charge. "I think people overestimate how far they might drive, especially since research shows most Australians only actually travel about 38 kilometres a day." Mr. White said.

Another major concern for Australian motorists is the dilemma of where to charge an EV. Mr. White said that most EV drivers simply charge their cars overnight at home like they do their phones. Public chargers are also more widespread than many people realise. There are more than 600 public charging stations in NSW, and more than 400 in Victoria. Queensland is home to the EV superhighway of fast chargers stretching from Coolangatta to Port Douglas, north of Cairns.

Mr. White believes that more Australians will embrace EVs in the near future as soon as they start seeing charging bays and car parks filling up with Tesla Model 3s.

J.R.Sanchez CP.



Forced Marriage Win

As a member of ACRATH (Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans) Qld, it is with a great sense of hope that I share with you a win for Freedom United (the largest global modern anti-slavery community), whose tireless campaigning has resulted in the UK passing a bill to ban child marriage. After years of struggle, and collective effort, the Marriage and Civil Partnership minimum age bill passed unanimously, criminalizing child marriage. Previously, 16 and 17 year olds in England and Wales were able to marry with parental or familial consent, a legal exception that left children vulnerable to being coerced into marriages against their will.

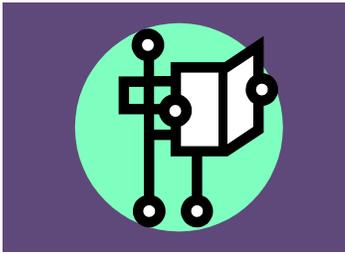
Payzee Mahmood, a campaigner and spokesperson for this Freedom United campaign, and her sister Banaz, were pressured into marriage in the UK at just 16 and 17 years of age. Banaz was then killed at the age of 20 in a so-called 'honour' killing for leaving her abusive husband. Payzee was eventually able to divorce her husband who was 12 years older than her, but the lasting effects of her experience of child marriage stay with her.



"I'm absolutely ecstatic that this is happening," said Payzee, "it's about time. I experienced financial abuse, I experienced mental and physical abuse, and this is the reality of child marriage. Nobody ever gave me any support or saw that this was wrong and that I was a child and I should've been protected."

Visit the ACRATH or Freedom United websites to see what campaigns are currently taking place and how you can add your voice to those already working together to free our world from the scourge of modern day slavery.

J.R.Sanchez, CP



Passionists

'The Fort'

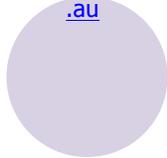
P. O. Box 1145
Oxley, Q4075

Phone:

(07) 3375 4206
or
0481 047 390

E-Mail:

sanchez346@ozemail.com.au



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See us at:

www.passionistworld.org



Updating the Reef

Coral bleaching in the Great Barrier Reef has been linked to a summer "marine heatwave". In the lead up to summer 2021-22 there was increased coral cover detected across the reef, but warmer waters were detected in December, increasing through to March. The findings were published on Tuesday in a report co-authored by the Australian Institute of Marine Science, the CSIRO and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. "Above-average water temperatures led to a mass coral bleaching event late in the summer," the report reads.

The reef's mean sea surface temperature during the period was recorded at up to 0.4 degrees Celsius above average in some parts. Bleaching of various severity was detected, and some parts of the reef were unaffected. "Compared to previous summers, cumulative impacts were limited this summer, with one major pressure, a marine heatwave, dominating," the report noted.

It's the fourth bleaching event since 2016

and the first during a La Nina year. "It is important to note that bleached corals are alive, but stressed. Low or moderately bleached corals have a higher likelihood of recovering," researchers said. Cyclone Tiffany tracked over the reef during summer but is believed to have caused minimal, if any, damage.

In March, sea surface temperatures on the Great Barrier Reef were in the top 10 per cent of records for the northern section of the reef, and for parts of the central section. Those records date back to 1900. That month, a UN monitoring mission visited Australia to evaluate the federal government's efforts to protect the reef from climate change and other threats.

It will report back to the World Heritage Committee, which may decide to list the reef as in danger. Tuesday's report noted the ongoing threat to the reef. "Climate change remains the greatest threat to the reef," it said. "The events that cause disturbances on the reef are becoming more frequent, leaving less time for coral recovery."

(From: The New Daily)

Looming Food Crisis

The Russian invasion and the sanctions on Moscow that followed have dramatically reduced the production of crops and fertilizer in Russia and Ukraine, causing major food shortages in vulnerable areas in the Middle East and Africa. The two large countries are both major producers of wheat, corn, and barley, while Russia and Belarus produce much of the world's fertilizer. Prices of those goods had already been trending upward due to global inflation and shortages caused by COVID-19, as well as the rise in gas prices that increased the cost of shipping. Now the war has made virtually every component of the global supply chain far more expensive. Supermarket prices are expected to rise by as much as 20%, while at least 44 million people are at risk of famine. For them, the war is "a catastrophe on top of a catastrophe," said David Beasley, executive director of the U.N.'s World Food Program. "We never would have dreamed anything like this would be possible."

Many Ukrainian farmers have gone to the

front lines to fight, and the farms they left are being ravaged by Russian shelling. That means Ukraine's spring harvest of barley, corn, and other crops — projected to be a strong season before the war — will be less than half of the 2021 level, the Agriculture Ministry says. Ukraine banned exports of wheat and other food last month to secure its own wartime supplies, but at this point it can't really export anyway: Russian warships are blocking access to its Black Sea ports and have bombed at least three civilian ships carrying Ukrainian goods. Ukrainian farmers will likely also miss their coming planting season, and those who are still in the fields have scrapped export crops in favor of foods that can be quickly harvested to feed civilians and soldiers. Russia's own ability to export, meanwhile, has been hamstrung by sanctions.

The complexity of the global supply chain makes it difficult to determine whether any particular price is rising because of the war or the pandemic or some other cause. In a Global village, what affects one country now affects all.

J.R.Sanchez CP.