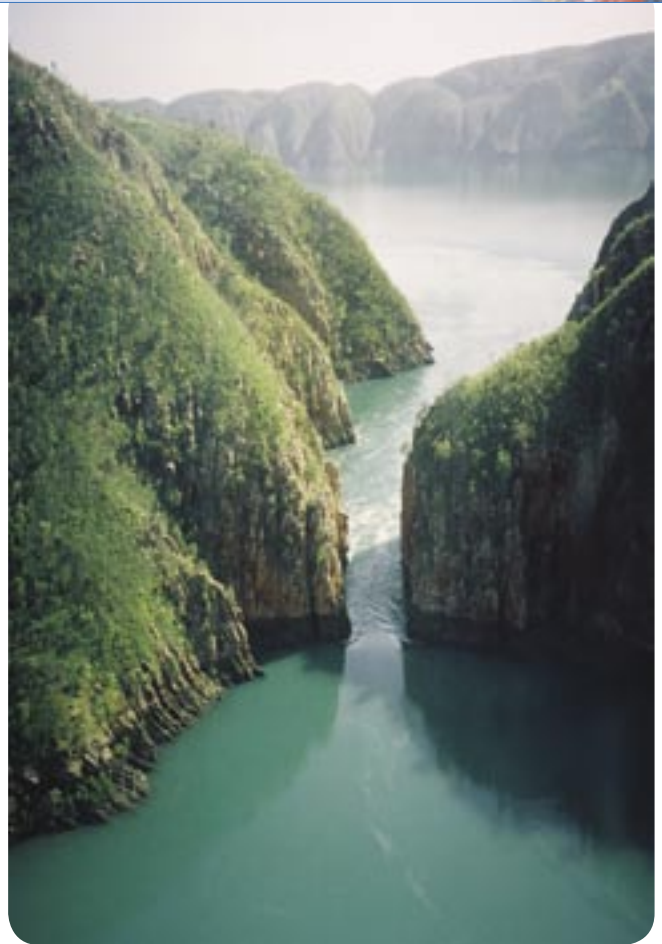




The trouble with justice is that, roughly speaking, it means 'giving everyone their rights and a fair go'.

We are all for justice but it can mean so many different things, most of them being problems hard to solve: solutions to hunger, homelessness and Third World disadvantage in a global economy; protection of the unborn and the frail aged; work towards peace, care for planet Earth, a reconciliation between mainstream and aboriginal Australians that respects culture and so on.

The Australian Catholic Social Justice Council, set up by our bishops, expresses the Church's tradition of commitment to social justice and to kindness for the disadvantaged; Lismore diocese takes part in that ongoing story. The bishops, through the Council's 2006 statement, ask us to think, pray and act on the theme: "Dignity and Justice for our Indigenous Sisters and Brothers."

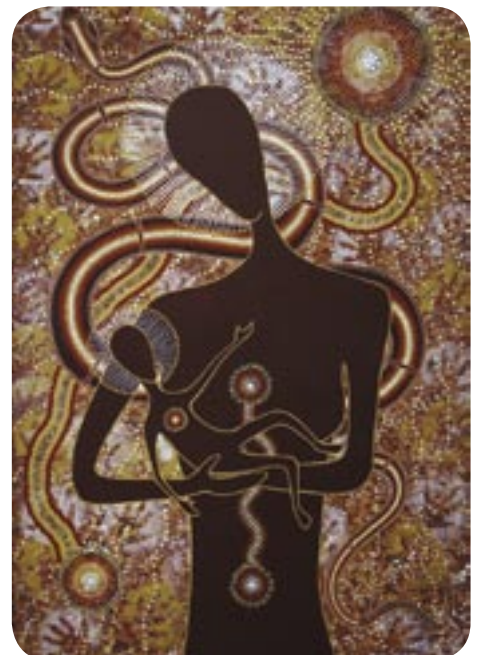


The Kimberley horizontal waterfalls

Preparation for World Youth Day 2008, will, no doubt, involve our own youth (and briefly at least, their many overseas guests in the Northern Rivers) in self-education and action on social justice themes.

The diocesan contact for the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council is Pat Coughlan (02) 6622 1545 and pvcoughlan@hotmail.net.au

For further information, contact:
www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au



Madonna and Child
by Richard Campbell



Children in detention at Port Hedland

One way in which Catholic communities pursue social justice is by formally setting up a group, separate from existing organisations such as St Vincent de Paul. Another approach is that Parish Priest and Parish Council (or other parish group) keep alert for action on issues, local or global, as they present themselves. A temporary letter-writing team could act on matters such as the recent bill to permit human embryonic stem-cell research. One economical way to contribute is to have one or more of the Catholic community commit themselves to attend, for example, Reconciliation or Sanctuary meetings.

Your Questions?

Q: Where does the nativity scene come from?

The first live reproduction of the outdoor Christmas nativity was made by St. Francis of Assisi for the event he staged in Greccio, Italy, in 1223. It was a way of communicating the true meaning of Christmas. The idea proved so popular that it soon spread throughout the Christian world.

The story of the nativity comes from the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Luke's account describes the journey of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem, where they must go to be counted in the census ordered by Caesar Augustus. Unable to find any room at the inn, they take refuge in a stable used to shelter animals. Here Jesus is born and laid in a manger filled with hay. In the hills overlooking Bethlehem an angel



tells the shepherds of Jesus' birth. Matthew's account tells of a brilliant star that appears marking the birthplace of Jesus and of the three kings that follow its light to find the Christ child.

The traditional grouping of wise men and farm folk is symbolic of the universal nature of Christianity and emphasises God's desire to embrace all people. The shepherds carry the richness of the Earth's harvest and the first to arrive carries

a dove, the symbol of peace. The angel, in bringing the message of the birth to the shepherds, is symbolic of the way God reaches out to all mankind with a message of peace. The wise men are traditionally kings with gifts of riches who symbolise how wealth and wisdom come to kneel before a greater King. Baby Jesus in a humble crib is at the very centre, as He is at the centre of life today. Since the time of St Francis, the practice has spread around the world in pageants, church reproductions, neighborhood rituals, professionally staged plays where huge casts including live animals are utilized and of course the school plays where sometimes the imaginative interpretation of the script provides highly original versions of the events.

(some of this information has been provided by artist Tony Johansen who painted the backdrop to the Nativity Scene at St Mary's Cathedral Sydney).

Q: What is the church's position on IVF? We have been married for nearly two years and have found out that we are unable to have children naturally.

A: It is a very difficult situation that you and your husband are facing and it must be causing you great sadness.

The Catholic Church's teaching on reproductive technologies is outlined in a paper from the Life Office of the Archdiocese of Sydney (<http://www.lifeoffice.org.au/resource/Catholics%20and%20reproductive%20technology.pdf>)

To quote from the introduction: "No matter how a human being comes into existence, he or she is always a person to be loved. We should always try, however, to act in ways which respect human dignity from the very first moment of a human being's existence.

Some forms of reproductive technology fail to show adequate respect for the value of human life and the meaning of procreation."

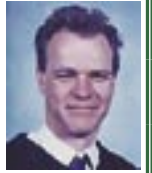
There might be a glimmer of hope for you as there are some ethically acceptable forms of reproductive technology (treatment of underlying causes of infertility; low tubal ovum transfer; and possibly GIFT).



Please be assured of our prayers for you as you discern this important decision.

Is there something about the Catholic faith you want answered?

Contact: Catholic Enquiry Centre
promotion@catholicenquiry.com
Ph: (02) 9211 4907



Sacred Heart, Dorrigo

The Dorrigo Plateau rises dramatically above the Bellinger Valley and is best known for the series of spectacular waterfalls that have given the road up to the



top the name the Waterfalls Way. For the early settlers of Don Dorrigo as it was known, the attraction was less the waterfalls and more the stands of timber and later the superb dairy country that opened out before them. A road was cut from Bellinger in 1865 linking Dorrigo to the coast but it was not until the early 20th Century that settlement really got under way.

Dorrigo was listed as a station of Bellinger when that parish was formed in



1908 and the first church was built in 1910. An attractive wooden church of the type found throughout the diocese, it served as both church and school for many years. Dorrigo became a parish in the 1915 just 5 years after the church opened and in the midst of World War I.

The present church was opened in 1960 as a memorial to those killed in the two World Wars and the Korean War. Signs of the new architectural styles that would revolutionise church design in the late 20th Century are evident in the A-frame structure

of the church which yet manages to retain the traditional liturgical orientation within.



Outside the church stands an attractive Lourdes Grotto overgrown with greenery and further back the original statue of St

John which stood outside the Presentation Convent now replaced by Mt St John's school.

Although Dorrigo is no longer a parish, it retains a rich sense of its history and past. The Presentation sisters have returned to the town and among them is Bride Baldwin who began her life in Dorrigo and has lived through the many changes in the town's history. The church itself and its well-kept grounds attest to the people's continuing love of their church.