

Vote for the *Common Good* –

The vision of the SAO election campaign is:

To re-establish the values of the *Common Good* in our society so that everyone and everything, experiences a fair go and shares fairly in the resources of this country.

The goals flowing from this vision are:

1. to identify and promote the core values underlying the *common good* as they relate to the specific policy issues of: water management, poverty and homelessness, and a culture of peace;
2. to educate the members of religious congregations for whom SAO exists, SAO Partners and others whom SAO chooses to network with on these issues;
3. to organise the above groups in appropriate ways in order to effectively lobby **all** candidates in the lead up to the 2004 Federal Election;
4. to share wisdom and planning with the members of the For the Common Good Circle, the group of people who have volunteered to take part in the planning and carrying out of this campaign and who will work collaboratively with the Campaign Project Workers.

CLRIQ have employed two people who will job-share the position of Project Worker for the campaign.

Dermot Dorgan and Tony Robertson are employed for the period of the SAO election campaign to carry forward the vision and goals of the campaign and to work collaboratively with the SAO Director, the Water Circle members and the Common Good Circle members.

Both Dermot and Tony bring wonderful gifts to the task at hand – from solid research skills to skilful lobbying and well developed and expressed creativity.

To contact either Dermot or Tony, phone (07) 3891 5866 or email Tony at tony@sao.clriq.org.au and Dermot at project@sao.clriq.org.au.



Dermot and Tony at the Social Action Office

Good websites to inform election decision-making:

SAO's Election Campaign: http://sao.clriq.org.au/election_campaign.html

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Federal Election Statement:

http://www.acbc.catholic.org.au/plenary_2004/0602_faith.html

ACSJC Social Justice in Everyday Life: http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/content/publications/documentation/social_justice_in_everyday_life.html

Refugee Action Collective Campaign: <http://www.rac-qld.org/> (click on *Election 2004*)

The Justice Project (Refugee Reform Program): <http://www.thejusticeproject.com.au/kit.pdf>

Vote 1 No More Poverty: <http://www.nomorepoverty.org.au/>

Catholic Social Teaching - *Common Good* Quotations: http://www.osjspm.org/cst/q_cmgood.htm

We have a rich land,
a common wealth
and a people
capable of a concern
for justice.

Australian Catholic
Bishops
1992

2004 Federal Election Campaign

The SAO will focus its education and lobbying around:

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The **COMMON GOOD** essentially means that EVERYONE has relatively easy access to what they need to live a fully human life - that is, to achieve their potential as human beings. It is a clearly evident that in Australia in 2004, thousands of Australians are denied an essential element of being able to achieve their full potential, namely - safe, affordable, appropriate and sustainable housing.

On the one hand we have had an extraordinary housing boom and on the other hand we have seen a significant decline in public housing and affordable housing. The market and government are clearly not serving the **COMMON GOOD**.

CAMPAIGN FOCUS:

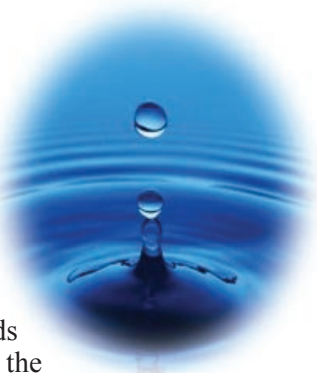
The SAO encourages people to talk with **all** candidates about policies that:

- will give an increase in public house stock
- narrow the target group for who is eligible for a first home owners grant
- support initiatives and incentives that result in affordable and sustainable housing.



WATER POLICY

There is a growing awareness of the fragile nature of our water supply in Australia. Moves are underway to regulate our access to water, in rural and urban environments. The **COMMON GOOD** demands that these regulations respect the needs of all sectors of the community, including the needs of the environment itself. Our current rate of water use is unsustainable. We are taking more water from our continent than its natural systems can replenish. The signs are unmistakable:



- many rivers have lost large proportions of their flow to urban, industrial and agricultural uses
- the “high and low” flow pattern typical of most Australian rivers, stemming from floods and droughts, has been interrupted by dams and weirs, threatening native flora and fauna which depend on the natural pattern for survival
- cultivated land as well as fresh water is increasingly affected by salinity
- watercourses are polluted by urban, agricultural and industrial runoffs, as well as by excessively cold water released from dams
- native plants and animals are threatened with extinction.

CAMPAIGN FOCUS:

SAO is asking **all** candidates in the Federal Election to support the increase of the “First Step” environmental flows to the Murray from 500 to 1500 GL per year.

A CULTURE OF PEACE

Our current global and national climate of fear and misuse of power and the significant rise of fundamentalism works against our vision of *seeking a world where relationships between persons and among nations are based on equality, mutual respect and the interconnectedness of human life with all of creation*. This can cause us to act out of fear and mistrust. We live in a time of unprecedented change that has the potential, if we become fearful, to draw us back into ways of being that do not serve us well anymore.

CAMPAIGN FOCUS:

As we prepare for the 2004 Federal Election:

- on a personal level, nourish the space in one’s heart and mind where DEEP PEACE reigns – a space that allows for clear and informed choices and decision making;
- be aware when fear is evoked and analyse the issue thoroughly – don’t allow others to play upon our fears
- take the time to reflect on the importance of attitudes and of non-violent ways of living and acting.



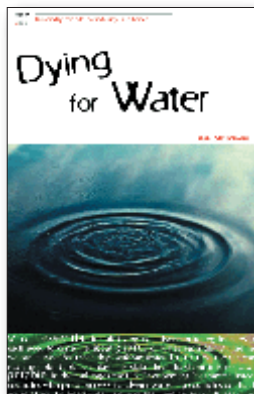
The SAO will be asking **all** candidates:

If elected, what will you do to actively promote a culture of peace, nationally and globally, and how will you do this?



The SAO has recently purchased one of Sean McDonagh's books *Dying for Water*.

This book details how human activity in all corners of the earth is precipitating a major environmental disaster. It is a short book containing numerous figures and statistics. These are necessary because moral discourse cannot even commence without knowledge of the facts. The first chapter launches straight into the problem: 1.2 billion people, roughly one-third of the world's population, do not have access to clean water. 2.5 billion have no sanitation and if we continue to use water as we do at present, the world will not have sufficient water in thirty years time.



Sean organises a vast amount of information under various headings including water and health, water and peace, water in agriculture and tourism, and destruction of the oceans. In his discussion of the problems, he ranges from bad practices in Ireland to the US, the Middle East, Africa, India and China. This approach makes digestible the large number of statistics presented to the reader.

Towards the end of the book, Sean writes of the necessity of shaping a theology which will help us to protect the world's fresh water and the world's sea water. He refers to the central role of water in both the Old Testament and the New Testament and argues that where water is being abused and polluted, the symbolic connection between living water and the power of the Holy Spirit through baptism is being significantly compromised. He asks whether baptism with industrial polluted water can be considered vivifying, invigorating and life giving. This is an invaluable book, a wake up call to all of us.

The book is available from St Paul's Bookstore or you may borrow it from the SAO.

Social Justice Sunday - 26 September



The Australian Catholic Bishops' 2004 Social Justice Sunday Statement will be launched on Wednesday 22 September. The theme for this year's Statement is *Peace Be With You - Cultivating a Culture of Peace*. The Statement acknowledges that "a culture of peace begins within our own hearts, spreads to our own households and then our communities before it can become an entrenched fact of the larger society's life."

Orders are now being taken for the Statement and details can be found on the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council website at http://www.acsjc.org.au/CONTENT/publications/documentation/documentation_sjs01.html or by phoning ACSJC on (02) 9956 5811.



2004 - International Year of Rice

<http://www.fao.org/rice2004/>

2004 is also the International Year to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and Its Abolition

AUGUST

- 14 Death of Maximilian Kolbe 1941
- 15 End of World War II in the Pacific 1945
- 16 Wave Hill Station returned to Gurindji People 1975
- 16-22 National Landcare Week
- 18 Vietnam Veterans Day
- 26 MV Tampa rescues 433 asylum seekers from a sinking vessel. Australian Government refuses entry to its shores and sends troops to prevent disembarkation 2001
- 27 Dom Helder Camara died 1999
- 29 Refugee and Migrant Sunday
- 30 East Timor's Independence Ballot 1999

SEPTEMBER

- 1 National Wattle Day - Spring commences
- 2 Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation Act 1991
- 4-5 Amnesty International Human Rights Conference at Southbank, Brisbane. More info: Ph (02) 9217 7698 or visit http://www.amnesty.org.au/whats_happening/hrc/
- 7 National Threatened Species Day (Last Tasmanian Tiger in captivity died in Hobart Zoo 1936)
- 8 International Literacy Day
- 12 Death of Steve Biko 1977
- 15 Racial Hatred Act, Australia 1995
- 16 International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer
- 21 International Day of Peace
- 24 Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma forms National League for Democracy 1988
- 26 Social Justice Sunday
- 28 Death of John Pat in Roeburne Prison WA 1983 initiated the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody
- 30 Racial Discrimination Act proclaimed 1975