

Message from the General Secretary

We all know the prayers that speak to us, prayers that we pray – perhaps daily, or perhaps in times of need, or at times when we have no other words to express our longing. One of the first prayers that was ‘my prayer’ is the Prayer of St Francis, beginning, ‘Lord, make me an instrument of your peace ...’

I actually I learned this prayer in 1959. When I say, I learned it, I learned the words. Perhaps it has taken me a whole lifetime to learn some of the implications. I continue to learn my need to pray it, asking God for the personal conversion that it needed to be truly an instrument of peace.

Besides the words of the prayer, I am reminded of my need for conversion and growth by the wonderful example of the many people who are peaceful people at heart and by their gentle but bold words and actions increase the peace in our world. I give thanks for them.



Australia's response to the crisis in Syria

On Friday, 11 September, together with church leaders and leaders of agencies, I participated in the meeting with the Prime Minister, Tony Abbott. He had called this meeting to enable people who are leaders of communities as well as leaders in organizations that provide services to refugees to speak with him and Government ministers, on matters relating to the Government's decision to accept 12,000 refugees from Syria.

Each person present was given the opportunity to speak. Many leaders of Eastern churches expressed concern for the processes of selection of refugees. They recognized that many of their members are not present in refugee camps, but have sought assistance from their churches.

The meeting was not meant to address practical implications of the Government's welcome decision as this was to be considered by the Refugee Resettlement Advisory Committee.

International Day of Peace 21 September

September 21 2015 marks the 70th International Day of Peace. It seems as though this day is needed more than ever in 2015.

The UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, urges us ‘... let us stand with the millions of people across the world who are suffering the devastating impact of violence and conflict. Let us share ideas and plans for helping and supporting them in their time of dire need.

Hopefully, in responding to this plea, we will share especially with Christians and in our planning and actions ensure that we look beyond our own' boundaries' to supporting all people in need.

The United Nations invites all nations and people to honour a cessation of hostilities during the Day, and to otherwise commemorate the Day through education and public awareness on issues related to peace.

"I call on all warring parties to lay down their weapons and observe a global ceasefire. To them I say: stop the killings and the destruction, and create space for lasting peace."



UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel (20-26 September) – resources available

God has broken down the dividing walls.



The World Council of Churches encourages churches around the world to pray and act for peace for Palestine and Israel during the week of 20-26 September. This year the theme is “God has broken down the dividing Walls”, focusing on the wall that Israel has built – variously known as the ‘security barrier’, the ‘separation wall’ and the ‘annexation wall’.

For more information, including worship resources:

<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/events/world-week-for-peace-in-palestine-israel>

Elizabeth Delaney sgs

Anti-Poverty Week (11-17 October)

Anti-Poverty Week is a time when we can all help fight poverty and hardship.

Poverty and severe hardship affect more than one million Australians.

Around the world more than a billion people are desperately poor.

The recent events in Europe, witnessing the plight of Syrian refugees fleeing their homeland, remind us that an absence of peace is a major contributing factor to poverty and hardship. At the same time, poverty and hardship can be a barrier to peace.

Established in Australia as an expansion of the UN's annual International Anti-Poverty Day on October 17, it is a week where all Australians are encouraged to organise or take part in an activity aiming to highlight or overcome issues of poverty and hardship here in Australia or overseas.



For more information, visit:

<http://www.anti-povertyweek.org.au/>
or call: 1300 797 290

Safe as Churches? 7 Conference

No, there is no ‘typo’. As Cameron Haig, National Coordinator of the Safe Church Program for the NCCA, explained, “The name of the conference, ‘Safe as Churches?’ includes the ‘?’ (question mark) as a way of keeping in front of mind that there have been past failures and when we gather we have a shared commitment to keeping our churches safe for all people, in particular children, at all times, in all our works”.

Delegates came from many Christian churches, from around Australia, as well as New Zealand and Fiji for the two-day conference and the masterclass.

The conference’s international guest speaker was Elizabeth Hall who since 1981 has been involved with working in the area of child protection in the United Kingdom. She has experience as probation officer, welfare officer and Guardian Ad Litem in the Family Court, Regional Manager for the Children and family court advisory & support service (CAFCASS), and Safeguarding Lead for CAFCASS. Elizabeth was until recently the Safeguarding Adviser for the Church of England & the Methodist Church.

Elizabeth spoke about the theme of the conference ‘Building Resilience’ defining resilience as “Resilience is the capacity for survival following soul-shattering trauma.” Keynote sessions focussed on response and prevention of abuse of children and vulnerable adults within church communities.

Chair of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, the Honourable Justice Peter McLellan AM, spoke about the work of the Commission to date, and the response of faith based institutions to its work. Of particular note was the importance given to the proposed national framework for accreditation with a centralized database in order to best protect children.



OUR ACTIVITIES

Act for Peace

Act for Peace has so far raised over half a million dollars for families fleeing Syria. Our ACT Alliance partners on the ground, such as in Jordan, are handing out food, clothing and hygiene packs. With nearly 4 million people having fled Syria and a further 8 million are internally displaced, this is one of the worst humanitarian situations of our time.

YOU COULD SAVE A LIFE



Food ration pack

Each pack contains food items such as rice, wheat, sugar, beans, lentils, salt and tea

[Give now >](#)



Hygiene relief pack

Each pack contains essential hygiene items such as soap, shampoo, toothpaste, toilet paper, tissues, laundry powder and disinfectant

[Give now >](#)



Clothing relief pack

Provides clothing for family of four. Each pack contains items such as underwear, socks, shirt and pants.

[Give now >](#)

For more information or to make a donation please go to our website <http://www.actforpeace.org.au/>

OUR CHURCHES

Holy Apostolic Assyrian Church of the East

The Holy Apostolic Assyrian Church of the East has announced the good news of the election of His Beatitude **Mar Gewargis Sliwa**, Metropolitan of Iraq and Russia as the 121st Catholicos-Patriarch of the Apostolic See of Seleucia-Ctesiphon for the Assyrian Church of the East. The announcement, made from Erbil, Iraq at 3pm Baghdad time on 18 September 2015, followed the convocation of the 14-member Council of Prelates from 16 September 2015 for deliberations.

His Beatitude was born on 23 November 1941 in Habbaniya, Iraq. He was consecrated Metropolitan of Iraq on 14 June 1981 in Chicago, Illinois by His Holiness the late Mar Dinkha IV, Catholicos-Patriarch of blessed memory. Since his consecration, the Metropolitan has made his headquarters in the Iraqi capital Baghdad enduring with resolve unceasing tumultuous periods of war, political upheaval, displacement and persecution.

Following his forthcoming consecration in St John's Cathedral, Erbil, Iraq on Sunday, 27 September 2015, the new Catholicos-Patriarch will assume the title His Holiness **Mar Gewargis III**. At the same time, the Patriarchal See of the Assyrian Church of the East will return to Iraq after having been established in-exile in the United States from 1933 and until present.

While we express here our gladness and thanksgiving to Almighty God for this good news, we recall that this election comes during times of immense darkness for the Assyrian people in Iraq and throughout the Middle East. As a persecuted minority group in a sea of conflict, the indigenous Christian Assyrians need now more than ever the wise and dignified leadership of the newly-elected Catholicos-Patriarch that he may continue to stand in solidarity with them and minister to them in their suffering.

Please lift up **Mar Gewargis Sliwa** in your prayers and supplications before our loving and immortal Creator, that He may guide him in carrying this heavy burden upon his shoulders for the glory of God and the uplifting of His Crown Church. For this we pray unceasingly; Lord have mercy upon us --- Amen.



Joseph Haweil

Lutheran Church of Australia

Later this month, the Lutheran Church of Australia is holding its 18th General Convention of Synod (29 September – 4 October) in Queensland. Included in this is the Lutheran Women of Australia (LWA) Convention (28-29 September).

Elizabeth Delaney sgs, along with other church representatives, will attend the opening service on 29 September.

We pray for the Lutheran church, the delegates and leaders. May they be blessed in their decision making and in the wider work in the communities they serve.

Harmony with God's Creation

Ecumenical Patriarch's encyclical issues call to dwell in harmony with God's creation

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/ecumenical-patriarch2019s-encyclical-issues-call-to-dwell-in-harmony-with-god2019s-creation>

ADVERTISED NCCA POSITION

DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS & FINANCE

The Director of Business & Finance is an executive staff member and is accountable to the General Secretary and the NCCA Executive.

The Director of Business & Finance leads a small team in supporting the vision, mission and strategic objectives of the NCCA; is responsible for the financial management, business operations, physical facilities and resources of NCCA including human resources, and is the Company Secretary of NCCA Limited. We are seeking an experienced CPA or CA with minimum 5 years of business management in the Not-for-Profit/Australian Charity sector.

For more information and a full application pack (including full job description and selection criteria), please email an expression of interest to Liska Turner at nfp@beaumontconsulting.com.au

Written applications should include:

a covering letter addressing the Personal Competencies and Skills Required as related to the duties listed in the position description (up to 2 pages maximum);

your Resume detailing work history and appropriate qualifications including CPA or CA; and
two recent employment referees with their daytime contact details.

INTERFAITH

One God to Bind us All

Elizabeth Delaney sgs, NCCA General Secretary, and Very Rev Fr Shenouda Mansour, General Secretary NSW Ecumenical Council, will be speaking at this forum held by the Islamic Foundation for Education and Welfare, Sunday 20th September. Part of the Positive Change Through Faith Series, the discussion will focus on the topic of Leveraging the wisdom and teachings of Abrahamic Monotheism in seeking ways of living together in harmony and minimise conflict.

September	21	International Day of Prayer for Peace
	20-26	World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel
	23	Eid-ul-Adha
	23	Yom Kippur
	27	Social Justice Sunday
	28-Oct 4	Sukkot
	29- Oct 4	Lutheran Church of Australia 18th General Convention of Synod
October	2	UN International Day of Non-Violence
	4	St Francis Day
	5-11	National Mental Health Week
	11-17	Anti-Poverty Week
	15	Muharram
	24-30	UN Disarmament Week



"There are many causes that I am prepared to die for but no causes that I am prepared to kill for."

Mahatma Gandhi
The Story of My Experiments with Truth,
1927