

## A Message from ACRATH's Chairperson



*Planning Group ACRATH  
National Meeting 2011*

Dear Friends,

Once again Joan Kennedy pbvm has gathered together some of the 'happenings' in ACRATH circles to connect us and gain encouragement from each other.

In the not too distant future we hope to have the revamped website up and running and this will hopefully be another means of communication.

Since the AGM the National Committee has met once formally, but much work has happened on various fronts. I am grateful for the work of the Committee and for the support and work in furthering ACRATH's mission undertaken by each of you.

In this Lenten time in the mellow light of Autumn we are pondering the darkness that is part of the human condition. A darkness that is so stark in the tragedy of human trafficking. Just as we believe in the paradox of the Resurrected Life emerging from a rough-hewn tomb, we hope, pray and work for a radical transformation from pain and suffering to hope and new life for the women, men and children who are trafficked and enslaved in our world.

May you, too experience the hope and love that Jesus' resurrection has given us this coming Easter tide!

Blessings,

Louise Cleary csb

Chairperson (on behalf of the ACRATH National Committee).

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## International Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Slavery

On the International Day for Remembrance for the Victims of Slavery, Friday 25 March, at the invitation of The Hon. Brendan O'Connor MP, Minister for Home Affairs & Justice, ACRATH hosted a morning tea and a community forum in Melbourne to mark the day. Present were the four funded NGOs plus other NGOs, service and community groups, government and social welfare agencies, academia, unions, members of the legal community and representatives from the International Office for Migration. It was an



*Louise Cleary chaired the meeting at Treacy Conference Centre, Parkville*

## International Day of Remembrance (cont from p. 1)

opportunity to open dialogue around services needed for trafficked and enslaved people and about other initiatives that could address and curb this crime in our society. The Minister announced that expressions of interest are being called for a \$2,000,000 grant to raise the awareness of labour trafficking.



*Peace Walk*

### Peace Walk

Marie Therese Ryder rmdm writes: “On Saturday 13 March about 60 people from different faiths gathered in Brandon Park on the Swan River near Marylands for our annual prayerful walk for peace. The theme of our walk this year was ‘Religious Freedom and Respect: Path to Peace.’ Representatives from Muslim, Christian, Buddhist and Hindu faiths each led a part of the

prayer. There are several bridges in Brandon Park and these provided an apt symbol for our reflection.

As part of our continued commitment to women who are being trafficked ACRATH WA had a table of beautifully crafted handwork from the Trading Circle for sale. All participants had brought some ‘cultural’ food to share and this helped us to connect in friendship with each other”.

## A snap-shot of some ACRATH Vic activities

On 27 March members of ACRATH Victoria attended a concert given by the opera singer Merlyn Quaife and her accompanist Andrea Katz. They believe in the power of words and music to make a difference. This ACRATH fundraiser raised \$3,324 for Tenaganita, a Malaysian agency which advocates for victims of trafficking. On 22 February Carol Hogan sss attended the launch of “traffic

free” Mars bars in Australia. Mars will now use Rainforest Alliance certified cocoa in all their mars bars.

On 3 March Christine Carolan and Noelene Simmons sm (NSW) met in Canberra with 2 ministerial advisers to explore the rights of trafficked people to access English classes at TAFE and to have access to financial compensation.



*Angela prepares for Cebu*

We send our best wishes to Angela Reed rsm as she leaves on 18 April for the Philippines. Angela will continue her research work among trafficked women at the Good Shepherd Centre Cebu. The Centre produces name tags sold in support of the victims of trafficking.



*International Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Slavery*

## An overview of ACRATH in Action since the AGM

In the two months since our AGM Conference so much has happened in our ACRATH State groups!

~ We welcome Kathy Fagan formally to her part time position in WA where she has made a very lively beginning.

~ Noelene Simmons sm in NSW has taken up the work on the website with great skill and energy.

~ ACRATH SA began this week in Adelaide after a visit by Louise Cleary and Christine Carolan in support of Ann Tormey rsm and State members. The group has agreed to tackle the task of educating themselves and their communities about human trafficking. They anticipate building networks with other groups and hope to

seek out teachers who might assist with education and awareness raising of senior students. Ann has arranged to report to the next meeting of the SA congregational leaders.

~ Papers were submitted by ACRATH to the enquiry from the AGD (Attorney General’s Department) on *Forced and Servile Marriages* and

## An overview of ACRATH in action (cont from p. 2)

*The Criminal Justice Response to Slavery and People Trafficking; Reparation; and Vulnerable Witness Protections.* Thanks to Christine Carolan for steering this work.

~ Our networking efforts have proven fruitful on many fronts. To name a few: an invitation to speak with the *Human Rights Sub-Committee of the Joint Standing Committee on*

*Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade;* meetings with AFP in different States. On April 14 we have been invited to participate in a AFP and AGD initiative: *People Trafficking: Achieving Collaborative Awareness.*

The newsletter captures some of the liveliness of our Members and passion for our work.

Thank you to each one for your efforts, proving once again Margaret Mead's adage:

***"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world."***

Louise Cleary csb



*ACRATH members rejoice with Sarah Menassa-Rose and Jassen on the safe arrival of their daughter Sophia Therese.*

## Strengthening International Networks

Monica Weedon fmdm reports: "In February I was fortunate to be attending a meeting of Franciscan's International in Bangkok in Thailand. ACRATH funded me to extend my time there to do some networking in the area of anti-trafficking. I was able to spend 4 days with the Good Shepherd sisters in Pattaya at their 'Fountain of Life' centre for women and children. They do great work there empowering women

through education, vocational training and counseling.

I was also able to visit the Good Shepherd sisters 'Fatima' centre, which, among many other things, provides women with employment producing beautiful articles for places like the Trading Circle. An appointment was arranged for me with two Australian Federal Police in Bangkok. They invited members of the Thai Social and Welfare

Development agency who have an anti-trafficking department. The Director who attended was pleased to hear that ACRATH is addressing the 'demand' issue in our community education and awareness raising. The whole trip to Thailand was a great opportunity for strengthening established networks and creating new ones and it was also a great learning experience for me personally".



*Fatima Centre, Bangkok  
Trafficking Prevention Work*

## News from ACRATH Western Australia

Naomi Mc Clements sgs and Kathy Fagan spoke recently to 100 Year 10 students at Mercedes Girls College. The talk focused on the 'Fountain of Life Centre' in Pattaya, Thailand linking this with the work of the Trading Circle. They showed photographs of Kathy's daughter working in

Pattaya. Further talks on the issue of Trafficking in schools and Universities, Multicultural and Women's Centres are being planned. Jane Triffitt has been following up on FAIRTRADE Chocolate for Easter and collected information about where it can be accessed in Perth. Lucy Van Kessel pbvm redrafted the media release

and made it available for ACRATH members to use in Churches, shopping Centres and Office notice boards. ACRATH WA wishes to thank all for the assistance that they are providing by sharing resources and supporting them as a fairly new and isolated group.



*Kathy Fagan WA*

## Highlight of the ACRATH National Meeting 2011

Professor Bob Pease, Chair of Social Work, Deakin University, Geelong has a long history of research on men's violence against women and cross-cultural and global perspectives on men and masculinities. As keynote speaker at the ACRATH National Meeting in February 2011, he provided us with a solid academic basis for addressing the demand side of sex trafficking, and critiquing the social constructs that underpin men's sense of privilege and entitlement

### News from NSW

#### News from NACRATH supplied by Margaret Ng rsj

On 18 February a number of ACRATH NSW members attended a day Seminar conducted by the Anti-Slavery Project at the University of Technology in Sydney.

Margaret Lergessner and Margaret Ng attended a Victim of Crimes Compensation meeting on 23 February. Margaret Ng was in Canberra on 28 February to attend the Prayer Breakfast at Parliament House. This was followed by a seminar on Trafficking in the international arena.

### FAIRTRADE at Easter

#### Make Your Chocolate Fair this Easter.

ACRATH is participating in a FAIRTRADE Chocolate Easter Campaign and is asking members to help send the following message. *Before you buy chocolates this Easter think about where it came from and who makes it.* About 40% of the world's chocolate is made from cocoa beans picked in West Africa, where many very young children, trapped in slavery, are forced to work. Help make a difference and choose FAIRTRADE chocolate. FAIRTRADE means NO child slavery. Check your supermarket.

### Expression of Thanks

Dear ACRATH friends,

I was very touched by the messages of sympathy you sent me over my dear brother Patrick's death. His passing is a big loss to us. The family circle is getting smaller, but we have had a wonderful and prayerful support from our friends and relations not to mention our religious families as well. Moya and I were very proud of Brendan at the Mass celebrating Pat's life and describing him so aptly in the homily.

Thank you all for your support.

Anne Byrne ibvm

## News just in from ACRATH Queensland ....

Janine Bliss fmm shares with us that the Queensland ACRATH Committee was invited to set up a display at the 2011 Justice and Mission (JAM) Expo. Each year several Catholic colleges on the south side of Brisbane participate in the JAM Expo which is hosted by Iona College, Lindum. The Year 12 Justice group from each College had set up a display showing their justice activities. The students were very enthusiastic and the displays were excellent. Several of the teachers not only took some material from the ACRATH display, but also gave in their email addresses for future contact. The students, particularly the girls, were very keen to take one of the ethical shopping cards prepared last year by the Queensland Presentation Sisters.

**Slavery Still Exists Today.  
Yes! Here in Australia.  
Increase Awareness  
You can help stop it!!**

**View our new look  
website on  
[www.acrath.org.au](http://www.acrath.org.au)**

ACRATH VICTORIA  
261 Victoria Street  
Abbotsford Victoria 3067  
Telephone 03 9205 4200

### ***Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans.***

**And that is who we are - we represent more than 8000 women and men who belong to religious orders and who are passionate about eliminating trafficking and slavery in Australia.**

**We also work in collaboration with other groups and individuals -both government and non-government.**

#### **Our Inspiration**

***"Nobody has the right to treat you as her or his slave and you should not make anyone your slave."***  
**Article 4 United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.**

***"I have come that you may have life and have it to the full" John 10.10***