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People are NOT for sale

From the ACRATH President

Greeting to all ACRATH members and friends. It has been a very busy start to 2018.

At the end of February many of us were fortunate to participate in the ACRATH National Conference. The theme for 2018 was Working to Eliminate Human Trafficking: Reclaiming the Vision; Planning On-going Action. Topics reflected on during the conference included Forced Marriage and Slavery in Supply Chains. Time was also taken to reflect on our international and local partnerships in the work of eliminating human trafficking. The ACRATH Conference is always an important time for members to come together to experience solidarity, to learn together and to plan for the year ahead. The AGM held during the conference elected the ACRATH National Committee 2018-2019. We are delighted to welcome two new members to the committee: Sr Claire Griffin csb, Regional Coordinator for Victoria, and Sr Sarah Puls sgs, Regional Coordinator for NSW.

As we look towards the coming months our advocacy will be focused on the outcomes of the parliamentary inquiry into whether Australia should have a Modern Slavery Act. The inquiry report, Hidden in Plain Sight, contains many recommendations that are in line with ACRATH’s advocacy over past years. We understand that a Bill will be introduced into Parliament mid-2018. Our hope is that we will have a robust Act that will provide strategies for preventing human trafficking and slavery as well as ensuring the human rights of those affected by this crime in Australia are able to be accessed.

As we continue our endeavours to eliminate human trafficking and slavery let us be inspired once again by Pope Francis who, in his recent Apostolic Exhortation - GAUDETE ET EXSULTATE, reminds us of “the dignity of a human life, which is always sacred and demands love for each person, regardless of his or her stage of development. Equally sacred, however, are the lives of the poor, ..., the victims of human trafficking, new forms of slavery, and every form of rejection.” (n. 101).

Sr Noelene Simmons sm ACRATH National President



Concluding ACRATH National Conference 2018



ACRATH’s Noelene Simmons on this working group

Date Claimer...Canberra advocacy

ACRATH is planning the Canberra advocacy work for Sunday 12 August to Thursday 16 August 2018. For further information please speak with your regional co-ordinator.

Below: ACRATH Vic celebrating Darrel Lea’s commitment to ethically source cocoa—April 2018



Right:
Logos for 3 forms of certification of ethical sourcing of raw materials (chocolate, coffee, tea etc)



Other News

Just Work

This group is chaired by Mark Zirnzak from the Uniting Church Justice and International Mission. Members include those from The Freedom Partnership to End Modern Slavery – Salvation Army, National Union of Workers, ACTU, ACRATH (including, Christine, Peter, Margaret and Therese).

Issues discussed recently were – Labour Hire Regulation, Black Economy Taskforce, Combating Illegal Phoenixing, Seasonal Worker Programme, Fresh Food Supply Chains, Vulnerable Workers Bill, Visa Simplification scheme, Private Sector Whistleblower.

Celebrations for the Feast of St Josephine Bakhita 2018

ACRATH members throughout Australia engaged in activities promoting the World Day of Prayer & Awareness Against Human Trafficking on 8th February, feast of St Josephine Bakhita. A significant focus this year was the commitment of Archbishop Anthony Fisher to slavery-proof the supply chain of the Sydney Archdiocese. ACRATH is pleased to be involved in this endeavour.

On 8 February many people gathered to celebrate St Josephine's feast day with Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral in Melbourne presided by the Episcopal Vicar, Joe Caddy. The singing and music provided by the Bakhita Choir of the Sudanese community was amazing. The following week Bishop Mark Edwards was the main celebrant at Mass at St Albans. Therese Power rsm spoke about ACRATH. Once again the music was inspirational. Claire Griffith cgs attended a Bakhita Mass at Noble Park. Bishop Peter Elliot presided there.

We are looking at ways we can celebrate this feast day in 2019 with the local Sudanese community.

Counter trafficking working group starting in Melbourne

ACRATH, the Archdiocesan Justice and Peace office, Caritas and the Episcopal Vicar for Social Services and Justice have met three times to plan a counter trafficking working group in Victoria.

The group is in an early stage of planning the work that they will undertake in this project. Discussion has focussed on awareness raising, advocacy and action. The ACRATH representatives on this working group will bring you more news as a plan emerges.

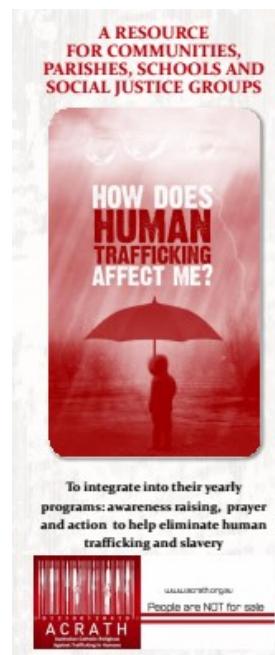
ACRATH is keen to see this idea taken up in other dioceses across Australia.

If you would like further information please contact

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Fundraising event in Western Australia

WA ACRATH members hosted a Thai banquet with 130 guests at Seton Catholic College on Friday 6 April. The event raised approximately \$3000 for ACRATH's goals. A raffle of thirteen baskets including the prayer to St Josephine Bakhita ended the night.



Above: this is a new ACRATH resource.

For copies please email viccoordinator@acrath.org.au

We acknowledge the funds received under a grant from the Australian Government. ACRATH also needs core business funding and additional funding for special projects.

Please consider a regular donation to ACRATH so that we can plan ahead.

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