

Social Justice and Decent Life for All!

Women's rights are human rights.

Domestic and family violence is the leading cause of death, illness and disability in Australian women aged 15 to 44 years.

Domestic violence is the single biggest cause of homelessness in Australia.

The most rapidly growing age bracket experiencing homelessness are people aged 55 and over.

1 in 3 women over the age of 15 have experienced domestic violence in the past 5 years.

Women provide 92% of primary care for children with disabilities.

The average weekly wage for women is 18.2% lower than men (82c against \$1)

The United Nations' World Day of Social Justice is annually observed on 20 February to encourage people to look at how social justice affects poverty eradication. It also focuses on the goal of achieving full employment and support for social integration. At the World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen in 1995 more than 100 political leaders pledged to make the conquest of poverty and full employment, as well as stable, safe and just societies, their overriding objectives. Has this been achieved? Do we have a stable, safe and just society?

Taking into account the effects of the pandemic on employment, we may have to accept that full employment is not achievable at present but what is happening about the eradication of poverty? What issues are of greatest concern?

According to the Australian Human Rights Commission, some of the issues include:

- Women's Rights
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders: Australia's First Peoples
- Homelessness
- Age and disability
- Bullying and Harassment.
- Seeking protection - refugees and asylum seekers

Under the heading for women's rights, we find:

Equal Pay for Equal Work

Do you know that Australian women on average are paid 18.2% less than men doing the same work? This means women would have to work an extra 64 days a year to get the same annual pay as men doing the same work.

Violence against Women

Violence against women is one of the most widespread human rights abuses in Australia and around the world. One in three Australian women will experience violence in an intimate relationship, and one in five women have experienced sexual violence since the age of 15. Additionally, domestic violence is the biggest cause of homelessness for Australian women.

As we face the year ahead we do not have any clear picture of what can be achieved. There could be further disruptions because of the pandemic. We may not have many opportunities for face to face meetings or group discussion. We can however help to raise awareness of social issues and be active in communicating with community and political leaders to highlight the need for action to address some of the social issues listed above. Have you included the United Nations Day for Social Justice on your calendar?

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May we always see the world through the eyes of Christ, speak to those we meet with the words of Christ, and take with us on our journey the peace of Christ