

Summary: Social Justice Statement 2018–2019

A Place to Call Home: Making a home for everyone in our land

The Australian Catholic Bishops' Social Justice Statement for 2018–19 is titled *A Place to Call Home: Making a home for everyone in our land*. It confronts the growing challenge of homelessness and housing insecurity in Australia.

The latest Census figures show that more than 116,000 Australians are homeless – something unacceptable for a rich and well-resourced nation like ours. Yet these people are only the tip of the iceberg: welfare agencies report growing numbers of families and individuals struggling to meet the cost of mortgages or rents and turning to specialist housing services, which are often unable to meet demand.

The Scriptural basis of the Statement is Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30–35), about an outsider who does something that rich and influential men refuse to do: he stops to help a man in desperate need, takes him to safety and pays for his care. The Statement also draws on the example of Pope Francis, who has reached out to men and women on the streets of Rome and reminded us forcefully of the rights of people experiencing homelessness around the world.

The Bishops consider the extent of our housing crisis and Australia's falling rates of home ownership. They focus especially on those in our society who are most vulnerable to housing insecurity and homelessness. We are reminded that safe and secure housing is a human right, asserted both by the Church's social teaching and by the Declaration of Human Rights.

Homelessness is a challenge for all levels of society: for government, for Church and community, and for us as individuals. Each one of us can make a difference and, when we join with others, we can be a real force for change that ensures everyone has a place to call home.

Bulletin note

The Bishops would welcome promotion of the Statement in the weeks leading up to Social Justice Sunday. A possible entry in your parish bulletin or newsletter could be:

We celebrate Social Justice Sunday on 30 September. This year, the Australian Bishops' Social Justice Statement is titled: 'A Place to Call Home: Making a home for everyone in our land'.

The Statement challenges us all to confront Australia's growing rate of homelessness and unaffordable housing.

For further details about the Social Justice Statement, visit the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council website (www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au) or call (02) 8306 3499.

Associated resources

The ACSJC website (www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/publications/social-justice-statements) will have resources available for download free of charge before Social Justice Sunday. They will include Social Justice Sunday Liturgy Notes, a PowerPoint presentation and resources for schools and social justice groups.

Prayer Cards and 'Ten Steps' leaflets can be ordered from the ACSJC on (02) 8306 3499 or by email: admin@acsjc.org.au.