

## Social Justice Sunday - Sunday 25 September 2011



The theme of this year's Australian Catholic Bishops' Statement is: Building Bridges, Not Walls. Prisons and the justice system. NSW Network of Catholic prison chaplains have provided a Prayer for Prisoners:

God, our Creator, we acknowledge the ancestors and original owners of this land, a land of wealth and freedom, far horizons, mountains, forest and shining sand. Maker and spirit of earth and all creation let your love possess our land and may we share in faith and friendship, the gifts unmeasured from your hand.

We pray for all the imprisoned, those on the inside, whose confinement is obvious and those on the outside, whose imprisonment is subtler.

We reach out in grace, knowing that human divisions are false, that we are not the innocent praying for the guilty or the right praying for the wrong but people praying for people, the hurt remembering the hurt, the failure reaching out in love to the failure in a single community.

We remember those who seek to change difficult life stories, midwives of hope and agents of grace. We remember and pray for the victims of crime on the outside, knowing that we do not have the luxury of black and white, the simple answer or the easy question.

We remember and pray for the countless victims on the inside casualties of uneven playing fields and difficult starts, dreamless futures and nightmare pasts.

We remember the whole criminal justice system and its process, those caught up in it, those on every side and in every moment of it.

We pray a blessing on all those who enter prison. We pray a blessing on all those who wait on the outside.

We pray a blessing on the world community. Teach us to deal with each other with compassion.

Keep all of us ever mindful of your law of love so that we may temper justice with mercy, exercise control with compassion.

May our motives and our actions conform to your will and fulfil your purposes all the days of this life so that we may share in the life to come. Amen.