

May 17, 2015

REFLECTION

MIND THE GAP

Soon after the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre, Benedictine nun and author, Joan Chittister wrote a fine reflection. Among other things, she noted that in the short window of opportunity that presented itself following the attacks, the United States had several options. One was to launch an offensive on world poverty, the underlying cause of much of the world's terrorist behaviours, or to launch a war on terror.

The nation shaped by the Cowboy and the Wild West, with a President to match, opted for an all-out war on terror.

The results speak for themselves.

We are more nervous than ever about the threat of terrorism. Many parts of the world are past being nervous and are subjected daily to acts of terror. As a consequence the world is awash with refugees and the gap between the wealthy and the poor continues to increase.

In the Federal Budget this week, the Government felt obliged to set aside some \$2.1b to ensure our anti-terror strategies were adequate to protect us all.

Figures released last week in the Herald, showed yet again the widening gap between the wages of people around our suburbs. Here at Hunters Hill our average wage was well in the upper bracket. In a good number of other suburbs, the average wage is falling well below what is considered to be basic to a family's needs.

In the middle of all this we have charities, churches, some community-minded companies and many generous individuals, trying to redress this imbalance. Our parish and parish school take initiatives and respond to needs whenever we hear of them. Our community's response to the Vanuatu cyclone, to Project Compassion, the Nepal earthquakes and to other needs that arise are unfailingly generous.

This Thursday, the Villa Maria school hall was packed with mothers preparing birthing kits for women in the more needy parts of Africa and Asia. The organisation, "Birthing Kits Australia" will see that they are delivered to places where they are most needed.

In parishes and communities all around Australia, people are working to bridge the gap between rich and poor and to bring some semblance of justice and dignity to our world. Refugee advocates, lawyers working for families at risk, welfare agencies and medical specialists are all contributing their skills and their generous hearts, and yet the gap keeps widening.

Some funding for people in need is diminishing, while we spend more on armaments and anti-terrorist measures. For all the good will and sacrifices that so many make, our world cannot bring itself to believe that a war on poverty will accomplish far more than a war on terror.

"Mind the Gap", we are often warned as we hop on or alight from a train. This could

become a worthy slogan for us as we reflect on the gap that divides the community both here and globally. As we fail to mind this gap that increasingly divides us, our world can only become more dangerous and more terror-ridden.

As Christians, we seek to return the world to the Love which created it and the Love Who is our only home. This Love is the deepest longing of every human heart. Let's continue to give ourselves fully to this saving mission of love at every turn.

In Jesus' rising from the dead, we have the means both to mind and bridge the gap should we so choose. Let's keep praying that we do!

Father Kevin