Advocacy

Teacher Background

Advocacy
Advocacy is the process of taking and working for a particular party’s interests in a conflict. Lawyers engage in advocacy when they represent a client in a legal proceeding. Disputants can also engage in advocacy themselves - arguing for their own position in negotiation, mediation, or a political debate. Many individuals and agencies of the Church engage in advocacy on behalf of others from a standpoint grounded firmly in Scripture, Church social teachings and Catholic tradition.

In the Archdiocese of Brisbane a number of Catholic agencies have as part of their charter, advocacy on behalf of the marginalised and under-served. These agencies fall under the broad umbrella of Centacare and are based around five major service points:

- **Disability Services** – support services for adults with a physical, intellectual or psychiatric disability.
- **Community Support Services** – community and in home services for the aged as well as respite services for children and young adults with a disability.
- **Family and Community Services** – marriage, family and relationship counselling, childcare services and the support of parish-based care and concern activities.
- **Employment Services** – job placement as part of the Jobs Network, specialised employment for people with a disability, community support programs and community work coordination.
- **Pastoral Ministries** – services based around hospital and prisons chaplaincy, prisons ministry, indigenous ministry, psychiatric pastoral care, mission to seafarers and AIDS/HIV counselling.

The Centacare website is located at: [www.centacarebrisbane.net.au/](http://www.centacarebrisbane.net.au/)

Catholic Prison Ministry
Catholic Prison Ministry provides a range of services to people who have come in contact with the criminal justice system including: prison projects; court support; family support and advocacy; chaplaincy; referral and networking. The work of the prison ministry service is a presence of the Church in the lives of people at very difficult and challenging times in their lives.

The focus of Catholic Prison Ministry is on the promotion of the concept of *restorative justice* which is based on the following principles:

- Prison must be an option of absolute last resort, used only when a person poses a threat to the safety and peace of the community
- The aim of the criminal justice system must be to bring about reconciliation and restoration, rather than incrimination and retribution
- Justice must be regarded as a community responsibility. Crime is not an individual problem. Social inequalities and injustices influence and give rise to crime
- Justice must be founded on the restoration of peace and right relationships in the community, not on the judgement and punishment of others
- People usually make the choice to live a lawful lifestyle when they are supported in an environment which affirms their self worth and provides for their basic needs.