



CHURCH WITHOUT FRONTIERS,
MOTHER TO ALL

101st WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS
AND REFUGEES
24th-30th AUGUST 2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE 5

MESSAGE FROM HOLY FATHER
POPE FRANCIS

PAGE 9

MESSAGE FROM BISHOP
VINCENT LONG

PAGE 13

20 YEARS OF MIGRATION POLICY TO AUSTRALIA

PAGE 17

COLLOQUIUM ON ETHICS AND MIGRATION

PAGE 18

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA
DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

PAGE 21

SUGGESTED PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

PAGE 22

JOHN BAPTIST SCALABRINI
FATHER OF MIGRANT AND REFUGEES



MESSAGE FROM HOLY FATHER POPE FRANCIS

Church without frontiers, Mother to all

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Jesus is “the evangelizer par excellence and the Gospel in person” (Evangelii Gaudium, 209). His solicitude, particularly for the most vulnerable and marginalized, invites all of us to care for the frailest and to recognize his suffering countenance, especially in the victims of new forms of poverty and slavery. The Lord says: “I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me” (Mt 25:35-36). The mission of the Church, herself a pilgrim in the world and the Mother of all, is thus to love Jesus Christ, to adore and love him, particularly in the poorest and most abandoned; among these are certainly migrants and refugees, who are trying to escape difficult living conditions and dangers of every kind. For this reason, the theme for this year’s World Day of Migrants and Refugees is: Church without frontiers, Mother to all.

The Church opens her arms to welcome all people, without distinction or limits, in order to proclaim that “God is love” (1 Jn 4:8,16). After his death and resurrection, Jesus entrusted to the disciples the mission of being his witnesses and proclaiming the Gospel of joy and mercy. On the day of Pentecost, the disciples left the Upper Room with courage and enthusiasm; the strength of the Holy Spirit overcame their doubts and uncertainties and enabled all to understand the disciples’ preaching in their own language. From the beginning, the Church has been a mother with a heart open to the whole world, and has been without borders. This mission has continued for two thousand years. But even in the first

centuries, the missionary proclamation spoke of the universal motherhood of the Church, which was then developed in the writings of the Fathers and taken up by the Second Vatican Council. The Council Fathers spoke of *Ecclesia Mater* to explain the Church’s nature. She begets sons and daughters and “takes them in and embraces them with her love and in her heart” (Lumen Gentium, 14).

The Church without frontiers, Mother to all, spreads throughout the world a culture of acceptance and solidarity, in which no one is seen as useless, out of place or disposable. When living out this motherhood effectively, the Christian community nourishes, guides and indicates the way, accompanying all with patience, and drawing close to them through prayer and works of mercy.

Today this takes on a particular significance. In fact, in an age of such vast movements of migration, large numbers of people are leaving their homelands, with a suitcase full of fears and desires, to undertake a hopeful and dangerous trip in search of more humane living conditions. Often, however, such migration gives rise to suspicion and hostility, even in ecclesial communities, prior to any knowledge of the migrants’ lives or their stories of persecution and destitution. In such cases, suspicion and prejudice conflict with the biblical commandment of welcoming with respect and solidarity the stranger in need.

On the other hand, we sense in our conscience the call to touch human misery, and to put into practice the commandment of love that Jesus left us when he identified himself with the stranger, with the one who suffers, with all the innocent

victims of violence and exploitation. Because of the weakness of our nature, However, “we are tempted to be that kind of Christian who keeps the Lord’s wounds at arm’s length” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 270). The courage born of faith, hope and love enables us to reduce the distances that separate us from human misery. Jesus Christ is always waiting to be recognized in migrants and refugees, in displaced persons and in exiles, and through them he calls us to share our resources, and occasionally to give up something of our acquired riches. Pope Paul VI spoke of this when he said that “the more fortunate should renounce some of their rights so as to place their goods more generously at the service of others” (*Octogesima Adveniens*, 23).

The multicultural character of society today, for that matter, encourages the Church to take on new commitments of solidarity, communion and evangelization. Migration movements, in fact, call us to deepen and strengthen the values needed to guarantee peaceful coexistence between persons and cultures. Achieving mere tolerance that respects diversity and ways of sharing between different backgrounds and cultures is not sufficient. This is precisely where the Church contributes to overcoming frontiers and encouraging the “moving away from attitudes of defensiveness and fear, indifference and marginalization ... towards attitudes based on a culture of encounter, the only culture capable of building a better, more just and fraternal world” (*Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2014*).

Migration movements, however, are on such a scale that only a systematic and active cooperation between States and international organizations can be capable of regulating and managing such movements effectively. For migration affects everyone, not only because of the extent of the phenomenon, but also because of “the social, economic, political, cultural and religious problems it raises, and the

dramatic challenges it poses to nations and the international community” (*Caritas in Veritate*, 62).

At the international level, frequent debates take place regarding the appropriateness, methods and required norms to deal with the phenomenon of migration. There are agencies and organizations on the international, national and local level which work strenuously to serve those seeking a better life through migration. Notwithstanding their generous and laudable efforts, a more decisive and constructive action is required, one which relies on a universal network of cooperation, based on safeguarding the dignity and centrality of every human person. This will lead to greater effectiveness in the fight against the shameful and criminal trafficking of human beings, the violation of fundamental rights, and all forms of violence, oppression and enslavement. Working together, however, requires reciprocity, joint-action, openness and trust, in the knowledge that “no country can singlehandedly face the difficulties associated with this phenomenon, which is now so widespread that it affects every continent in the twofold movement of immigration and emigration” (*Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2014*).

It is necessary to respond to the globalization of migration with the globalization of charity and cooperation, in such a way as to make the conditions of migrants more humane. At the same time, greater efforts are needed to guarantee the easing of conditions, often brought about by war or famine, which compel whole peoples to leave their native countries.

Solidarity with migrants and refugees must be accompanied by the courage and creativity necessary to develop, on a world-wide level, a more just and equitable financial and economic order, as well as an increasing commitment to peace, the indispensable condition for all authentic progress. Dear migrants

and refugees! You have a special place in the heart of the Church, and you help her to enlarge her heart and to manifest her motherhood towards the entire human family. Do not lose your faith and hope! Let us think of the Holy Family during the flight in Egypt: Just as the maternal heart of the Blessed Virgin and the kind heart of Saint Joseph kept alive the confidence that God would never abandon them, so in you may the same hope in the Lord never be wanting. I entrust you to their protection and I cordially impart to all of you my Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 3 September 2014
FRANCISCUS



MESSAGE FROM BISHOP VINCENT LONG

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Holy Father, Pope Francis, in his message for the 101st World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 2015, has chosen the theme “Church without frontiers, Mother to all”. It is part of our Christian mandate from Jesus Christ to care for others and in particular the most vulnerable (c.f. Mt 7:12 and 25:35-36). The Holy Father, wishing to draw attention to and remind us of this, has chosen this theme. He wishes us to go beyond ourselves, to live an authentic Christian life, and show compassion and solidarity to those at the furthest fringes of society. In particular, Pope Francis has identified migrants and refugees to be in need of our special attention and care, as they are our brothers and sisters *“who are trying to escape difficult living conditions and dangers of every kind.”* (Message, 2015).

The Holy Father mentions that, *“from the beginning, the Church has been a mother with a heart open to the whole world, and has been without borders.”* (Message, 2015). We need to continue this tradition and welcome our brothers and sisters who are in most need of our assistance, in particular, those who have come from distant lands seeking a better life. Whilst the plight of refugees is often present and visible on our television screens, let us not forget the difficulties faced by the many migrants who have come to call Australia home. Often their hardships are not evident, but nonetheless still present.

In this message, I would like to draw your attention to the on-going conflict in the Middle East and the issues closer to home faced by asylum seekers, as well as the often-unseen difficulties faced by migrants in our communities.

Over the past year, we have seen on our television screens, our Christian brothers and sisters in the Middle East continue to suffer the ruthless barbarity of extremism under ISIS. Many men, women and children are being forced to flee from their homes for fear of their lives. We have constantly seen the atrocities at the hand of ISIS, which can often lead us to question human solidarity (care for our neighbour), and not to mention sometimes our faith. How can it be, that fellow human beings can inflict such acts of torture and barbarity on one another? It is precisely now that the message of the Gospels needs to be proclaimed from all corners of the world and in every state of life. The Holy Father, quoting the Message for 100th World Day of Migrants 2014, says, *“this is precisely where the Church contributes to overcoming frontiers and encouraging the ‘moving away from attitudes of defensiveness and fear, indifference and marginalisation...towards attitudes based on a culture of encounter, the only culture capable of building a better, more just and fraternal world’”*. (Pope Francis, Message 2014).

As a result of on-going conflicts in the Middle East, UNHCR estimates that there are now over 2 million refugees in the region, as well as over 7 million internally displaced persons. (*Population of Concern to UNHCR, UNHCR Global Appeal Update 2015*). An increase in conflict in this region will inevitably result in an increase of our brothers and sisters seeking safety and asylum. This is a time to heed the Holy Father’s words and once again show Christian solidarity to those in need. Where migrants

and refugees are concerned, the Church and her various agencies ought to avoid offering charitable services alone; they are also called to promote real integration in a society where all are active members and responsible for one another's welfare, generously offering a creative contribution and rightfully sharing in the same rights and duties. (Pope Benedict, Message 2013).

Pope Francis says, *"the courage born of faith, hope and love, enables us to reduce the distances that separate us from human misery. Jesus Christ is always waiting to be recognised in migrants and refugees, in displaced persons and in exiles, and through them he calls us to share our resources, and occasionally to give up something of our acquired riches."* (Pope Francis, Message, 2015).

This is an important opportunity for solidarity and to welcome these persecuted peoples into our own home, Australia. As a refugee myself, along with several members of my family, seeking shelter and security, Australia has always been generous. It is now again the time to show the same kind of generosity that was shown to the Vietnamese refugees 40 years ago, to our Middle Eastern brethren as well as those in our Asia-Pacific Region seeking asylum from separate, but no less important, conflicts.

Fear of the unknown, a true and real fear, can often unnecessarily guide our decision-making. It is time to turn to our Christian roots, with ever more trust in God, and move beyond fear towards charity and express solidarity with those who suffer. The Holy Father, ever attentive to the failings of the human nature notes that, *"Often, however, such migration gives rise to suspicion and hostility, even in ecclesial communities, prior to any knowledge of the migrants' lives or their stories of persecution and destitution. In such cases, suspicion and prejudice conflict with the biblical command of welcoming with respect and solidarity the stranger in need."* (Message, 2015).

Closer to home, migrants too in our local and parish communities can sometimes be looked upon with suspicion. Migrants in our communities often go through challenges and difficulties that are unseen, but are no less real and difficult. Simple things, which many of us either growing up or living in Australia for a long time, often forget or simply don't notice, can be a challenge for new migrants. Things such as language, culture or customs can bring about hardship and anxiety. It is precisely here, in these everyday situations, that Christ is calling us to move beyond ourselves, and express solidarity to our fellow brothers and sisters. To lend a helping hand, just saying hello or even just a simple smile. This is the beginning of 'encounter'. From here we can move together in solidarity. Many of us may never change the world, but let us not forget that we can change the world around us.

I understand that often this is not such an easy thing to express. How often, due to the weakness in our nature, can we *"be tempted to be that kind of Christian who keeps the Lord's wounds at arm's length"* (Evangeli Gaudium, 270). The call to be a catholic, a radical and counter cultural call, at its deepest core, urges us not to stand on the sides but to become involved in bringing about a more just society. So I would call upon parishes, and most importantly, individuals to look at the little opportunities in our own lives where Christ is calling us to express charity and solidarity to migrants and refugees.

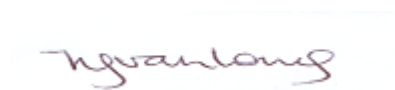
Included in this Kit is the life of the Blessed Bishop John Baptist Scalabrini, whom Pope St John Paul II defined as the *"Father of Migrants and Refugees"* and offered to the veneration and intercession of the entire Church. Blessed Scalabrini dedicated

his life in the service of migrants from Europe to the Americas. He identified the unique pastoral care necessary for these communities, the difficulties and realities faced, as well as the pastoral sensitivities required when providing assistance. I would encourage all reading this Kit, but in particular my brother Bishops and fellow Priests, Religious Sisters and Brothers and all who offer pastoral care to migrants and refugees to read his life and encourage his devotion and pray through his intercession in their Dioceses and Parishes, in particular during Migrant and Refugee Sunday. Through the intercession of Blessed Scalabrini, I would hope that we may achieve a fruitful pastoral service of communion.

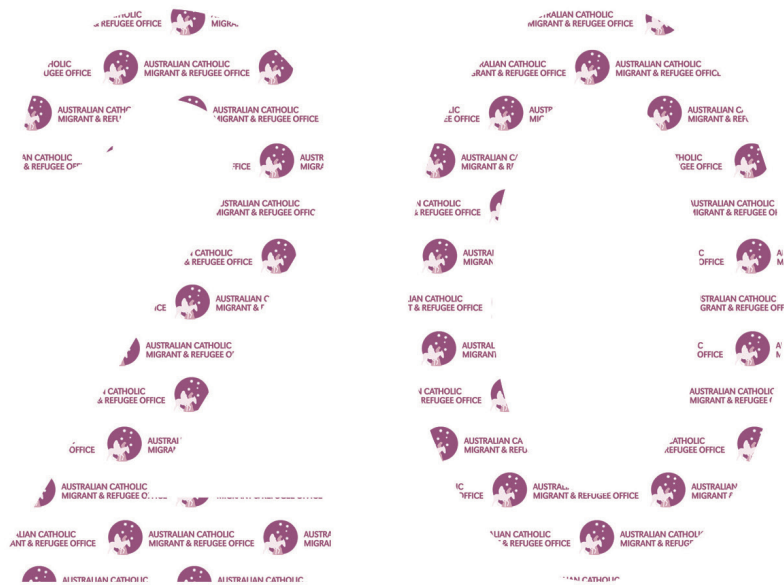
2015 also marks the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office (ACMRO), in its present form. To commemorate this milestone and as a pastoral tool, we have included an article on 20 years of teaching on migrant and refugee issues. The timeline looks at migration policy in Australia in conjunction with the response of the Universal Catholic Church and the Catholic Church in Australia. I hope that this timeline graphic can be used as a tool to reinforce the work, advocacy and pastoral care that the Church has strived to provide on a national and international level. The timeline has been included as a central page in the middle of the Kit for it to be detached and placed in the church foyer; an electronic copy will also be available on the ACMRO website.

To conclude, I would like to encourage all Dioceses and Parishes to celebrate and commemorate the unique contribution that migrants and refugees have and continue to provide to our communities. “The Church sees this entire world of suffering and violence through the eyes of Jesus, who was moved with pity at the sight of the crowds wandering as sheep without a shepherd (cf. Mt 9:36). Hope, courage, love and “‘creativity’ in charity” (Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, n. 50) must inspire the necessary human and Christian efforts made to help these brothers and sisters in their suffering” (Pope Benedict, Message 2005). The phenomenon of migration today is a providential opportunity for offering more opportunities to broaden our understanding and vision of the world as well as moving forward together in solidarity towards a better and more just world.

God Bless



Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen
Bishop Chair for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees



Years

OF AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC
MIGRANT AND REFUGEE OFFICE



20 YEARS OF MIGRATION POLICY TO AUSTRALIA

2015 marks 20th anniversary of the Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office (ACMRO). The ACMRO was established by the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference (ACBC) on 1 July 1995. It took the place of two previous Conference bodies – The Federal Catholic Immigration Committee and The Australian Catholic Refugee Office. The ACMRO assumed many of their functions and is primarily responsible to the ACBC through the Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life.

The work of the ACMRO can be best described by the mandate given by the Bishops:

- To advise and serve the ACBC at both a national and international level on migrant and refugee issues, including the development of Church policy.
- To act as an official Church voice as approved by the Bishops' Conference on issues relating to migrants and refugees.
- To act as a channel of communication between Diocesan Offices and the Bishops' Conference.
- To provide a mechanism for effective consultation and coordination among Catholic bodies and other groups involved in migrant and refugee activities.
- To make appropriate representation to Government and other bodies on matters relating to migrants and refugees.


The primary objective of the ACMRO is to advise the Bishops on, facilitate and support the national approach to the pastoral care of migrants and refugees across Australia.

The Church, '*expert in humanity*', (*Veritatis Splendor*, 3) has always been aware of the struggles and hurdles of those who are forced to migrate whether it be for economic or political reasons, as asylum seekers, refugees, victims of human trafficking, displaced people or international students. The Church is also keenly aware of the shameful phenomenon of trafficked women and children to feed the sexual slavery market, or for the trafficking of human organs.

Pope St. John Paul II in *Veritatis Splendor*, (1993) spoke of the importance of the Magisterium, or authoritative teaching of the Catholic Church, to bring about her mission. The Magisterium is a concrete expression of the 'wisdom' of the Catholic Church, which results from centuries of experience in dealing with 'human affairs'. The qualified reflection on good pastoral practices can be used by the faithful to discover the 'treasure of tradition'. The Magisterium represents the ordinary and extraordinary exercise of the authoritative teaching of the Catholic Church on matters of faith and morals. Such a ministry is entrusted to the hierarchy, in faithfulness to the expressed will of Jesus Christ. At the universal level, the Magisterium offers a global vision and response to the different issues confronting humankind, where the analysis of the 'big picture' made by experts starts with grassroots level analysis. An overview of the Church's magisterium and guidelines for the pastoral care of migrants and refugees since 1995 can be observed through the following events:

PAPAL DOCUMENTS

AUST



1995: "May You Reach the Goal you have Chosen"

1996: "Undocumented Migrants"

1997: "The Circumstances of Migrants"

1998: "The Church Looks with Deep Pastoral Concern"

1999: "The Jubilee which we are Rapidly Approaching"

2000: "On the Threshold of the New Millennium"

2001: "The Pastoral Care of Migrants"

2002: "Migration and Inter-Religious Dialogue"

2003: "For a commitment to overcome all racism, xenophobia and exaggerated nationalism"

2004: "Migration with a view to peace"

2004: Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi

2005: "Intercultural Integration"

2006: "Migrations: a sign of the times"

2007: "The Migrant Family"

2008: "Young Migrants"

2009: "St Paul Migrant, 'Apostle of the Peoples'"

2009: Caritas in Veritate

2010: "Minor Migrants and Refugees"

2011: "One Human Family"

2012: "Migration and the New Evangelization"

2013: "Migrations: Pilgrimage of Faith and Hope"

2013: "Welcoming Christ in the Refugee and the Displaced Persons"

2014: "Migrants and Refugees: Towards a Better World"

2014: Evangelii Gaudium

2015: "Church without frontiers, Mother to all"

1994: Indefinite Mandatory Detention

1997: Management of immigration, outsourced and privatised.

1991-2001: Approximately 8,000 people on Australian shores.

2001: MV Tampa refused entry, rescuing more than 400 asylum seekers.

2001: 'Pacific Solution'

2004: The High Court rules that detention is indefinite.

2005: The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child states that children should be assessed with care and that detention centres should be used as a last resort.

2007: End of Pacific Solution. Christmas Island.

2008: Government abolishes the Pacific Solution.

2010: Governments Malaysia and Australia agree to a new arrangement for the processing of asylum seekers.

2011: Protests and, hunger strikes in Australia.

2012: Re-establishment of offshore processing on Manus Island.

2013: Government announces a new arrangement with Papua New Guinea.

2013: UN Human Rights Committee finds that indefinite detention of refugees is a violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

2013: All-time high of 1,992 children in detention.

2013: Operation Sovereign Borders.

2014: Manus Island detention centre.

2014: Turn back boats policy.

2015: 'Cambodia Solution', voluntary return to Cambodia.

AUSTRALIA

attention.

ation detention centres

00 asylum seekers landed on

y into Australian waters after
um seekers.

that stateless person can be

the Rights of the Child: chil-
in 48 hours and conditions in
p to international standards.

Processing to occur at Christ-

Temporary Protection Visas.

swap deal deemed unlawful

kes in detention centres across

shore processing at Nauru and

a new regional resettlement
y Guinea.

mittee finds Australia breached
vil and Political Rights by
y who failed

ildren in closed detention.

orders.

centre riot.

luntary resettlement.

ACBC RESPONSE

1995: The ACMRO is established.

1996: Pastoral Letter: A Rich and Diverse Australia.

1998: Condemns any form of racism against
migrants and refugees.

1999: Acknowledges the role of Australia in provid-
ing temporary asylum to 4000 refugees from Kosovo.

2000: Pastoral Statement: reflecting on the teaching
of Gospel and on Catholic Social Teaching.

2001: Calls for an increase the number of refugees
admitted to Australia each year.

2002: Statement: Applauds Australian and
Indonesian Governments for hosting important meeting on
people smuggling.

2003: Statement supporting the pastoral care
offered by many priests and religious sisters in detention
places.

2004: Statement: Bishops call Government to be
consistent with obligations under the International Law.

2005: It is wrong to discriminate against people on the
basis of nationality, race and religion.

2005-2009: messages reflect the need to open up to the
need of all those seeking protection in Australia.

2007: Graced by Migration: National pastoral care for
migrants in Australia.

2010: Migrant and refugee children need much attention
both at national and international level. Founding of
Colloquium on Ethics and Migration

2011: Is national identity found in the protection of borders
or in promoting justice and truth?

2012: Migration presents challenges and
opportunities.

2013: The Church points at the good of each person and
their inalienable rights.

2014: Working for a better world requires countries to pro-
vide dignified living condition for everyone.



The Universal Magisterium has been built on a hermeneutic of continuity with a long tradition of Church teaching on the pastoral care of migrants and refugees. These contributed to specific practical strategies that would make pastoral care to migrants relevant in today's world and Church.

What has been presented is an impressive contribution that underlines the main obligations that not only the Church, but the whole of humanity have towards migrants. Human mobility has always been a genuinely human experience. The Second Vatican Council champions a pastoral care that is relevant to "the joys and hopes, the grief and anxiety" (*Gaudium et Spes*, Preface) of migrants and refugees.

In the last 20 years the Catholic Church has spoken on matters of pastoral care to migrants and refugees through various documents issued by the universal magisterial ministry. These include the Pope's yearly message for World Day of Migrants and Refugees, Messages, Apostolic Letters and Constitution, Homilies and Exhortations as well as through the symposia, studies, publications and international gatherings organised by the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care to Migrants and Itinerant People. The documents are a testimony of the Church's concern with the needs of the people on the move. In fact, they range from responses to immediate needs to pastoral guidelines, from theological and ecclesiological reflections to specific pronouncements commenting on migration policies, lobbying, advocating, denouncing injustices and breaching of human rights, and proposing pastoral care programs.

These documents take into consideration the global phenomenon of migration, the dynamics of migration flows and their root causes. They also appeal to the responsibilities of the ecclesial reality where immigrants ought to be welcomed as a resource and as agents of evangelization.

All of these find their deepest root in the biblical memory of the foreigner, who, together with the widow and the orphan, is protected by God and whose experiential memory, the people of God ought not to forget. The ultimate and lasting identity of the stranger is to be found in Jesus: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Mt 25:35), thus, "whatever you did to least of my people, you did to me" (Mt 25:40).

As the church journeys and reflects on the path of the human mobility, it is clear that her teaching and pastoral guidelines are informed by the growing complex phenomena of the last 20 years which is marked by the soaring number of forcibly displaced people as a tragic result of natural disasters and conflicts worldwide, as well as the increased numbers in skilled migration. These factors combined with increasing inequality between nations mean the humanitarian challenge of displacement has been increasingly felt by the world's poorest nations. The Church implores that at the place of destination for human movement, the community or nation that receives them, will welcome them.

COLLOQUIUM ON ETHICS AND MIGRATION

27 August 2015



Bishop Joseph Grech

“Perhaps the greatest cause of division is dwelling on one another’s difference. On the cross, Jesus’ outstretched arms embrace everyone. All human beings are equal in God’s sight, making it wrong to discriminate against people on the basis of race, nationality, race or religion. We are all created in the images and likeness of God. The challenge for us as followers of Christ is to recognise the dignity of every person and to welcome and to help all cultural and ethnic groups to feel at home in this great country of ours.”

Most Reverend Joseph Grech, D.D.
Message for Refugee and Migrant Sunday 2005

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA
DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES
CHURCH WITHOUT FRONTIERS, MOTHER TO ALL

Reflections for the Sunday Homily

The Word of God that the Church offers for our life this Sunday presents the fascinating theme of the relationship between God and His people themed around the discussion on the Law.

In the book of Deuteronomy, Moses challenges the people whether or not they are keeping the memory of God's wisdom and persistent love, for this is the value at the origin of the journey of liberation and freedom, out of Egypt towards the land of the promise.

The Apostle James reminds the Church that it is not enough to listen to the Word of God: one must listen to the Word, receive it and make it bear fruits that are visible: "Be doers of the Word and not hearers only, deluding yourselves... Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to care for orphans and widows in their affliction and to keep oneself unstained by the world."

Somehow, the Law should emphasize the intimate connection between the listening and the doing of the Word which is so beautifully reflected in the encounter between the Word and the young Samuel: "Samuel promptly answered: 'Speak, for your servant is listening'" (1 Sam 3:10).

But how do we listen to the voice of the Lord who speaks to us today?

This Sunday, the Church in Australia marks Migrant and Refugee Sunday. The theme chosen by Pope Francis for the 101st World Day for Migrants and Refugees is: Church without frontiers, Mother to all. Pope Francis, in his message, reminds everyone that, "The Church opens her arms to welcome all people, without distinction or limits, in order to proclaim that 'God is love'" (1 Jn 4:8, 16).

The Pope, himself the son of Italian immigrants who made their home in Argentina, grounds his message on the very experience of migrants and refugees as we see it today: The Church without frontiers, Mother to all, spreads throughout the world a culture of acceptance and solidarity, in which no one is seen as useless, out of place or disposable. Today this takes on particular significance. In fact, in an age of such vast movements of people, such migration can give rise to suspicion and hostility, even in ecclesial communities, prior to any knowledge of the migrants' lives or their stories of persecution and destitution. In such cases, suspicion and prejudice conflict with the biblical commandment of welcoming with respect and solidarity the stranger in need.

This is in stark contrast with what we often read in the newspapers, listen to on the radio or watch on television. These means of communication tend to use a language of deterrence and fear such as: illegal immigrants, queue jumpers, undocumented, boat people; border protection. Two different voices with two different messages. Our actions are largely decided upon the way we listen to and act on these voices.

Without the possibility of constructing a fence around Australia, we have developed intricate policies to deter asylum seekers arriving by boat. For several decades, successive Australian governments have continued to implement increasingly harsh measures which punish asylum seekers in the hope that this will stop them arriving. For over 20 years both political parties have maintained a policy of indefinite mandatory immigration detention. Most detention facilities are in very remote areas and harsh environments. This is in contrast to the policies during the 1970s and 1980s of welcoming and providing assistance for Vietnamese, East Timorese and South American refugees.

Making immigration detention mandatory denies natural justice and procedural fairness.

Many asylum seekers have horrific stories which are often ignored. Around 1,000 people have died at sea over the last decade making the journey from Indonesia to Australia. This is often used by politicians to implement even harsher deterrent measures to justify doing something to stop the loss of life at sea.

Church without frontiers, Mother to all speaks a different voice. The Church is not about implementing a political policy, neither it is about a personal opinion. The Church derives her voice from that of Christ: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me", "Whenever you did this for one of the least of my followers you did to me". (Mt 25:35-40).

The real issue here is that we are not asked to welcome and offer hospitality to migrants because we are exceptionally good people and we like these migrants very much (hopefully we are exceptionally good people and we do like these migrants very much!). Individual initiative alone and the interplay of competition will not ensure satisfactory engagement. We cannot proceed to increase the wealth and power of the rich while we entrench the needy in their poverty and add to the woes of the oppressed, (Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*). The reason goes much deeper and it is to be found at the heart of our relationship with Jesus: "Whenever you did this for one of the least of my followers you did to me" (Mt25:40). The Catholic Church in her teaching and her practice echoes the depth of this relationship with Jesus transforming it in values of life. "No one would exchange his/her country for a foreign land if his/her own afforded him/her the means of living a decent and happy life" (Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, May 15, 1891).

The Catholic Church teaches that all people have the right to live a dignified life in their homeland. Tragically, over 45 million people around the world are displaced. War, natural calamities, persecution and discrimination of every kind have deprived millions of a home, employment, education, family and homeland. The Catholic Church teaches that anyone whose life is threatened has the right to protection. Be it because of persecution, armed conflicts, natural disasters, or economic conditions that threaten their lives or physical integrity. It is the element of persecution, threat or danger, or being forcibly displaced that gives rise to a right to seek asylum rather than to migrate through ordinary channels.

So, what is the real issue?

A person's country of birth is the single biggest factor that will determine their quality of life. A person's level of education, ambition and intellect all run a distant second to being born in the right country. As such, the Popes have continuously called

us to abandon a culture of greed and to adopt a culture of justice and solidarity, calling us to be more generous with the world's resources.

If prosperous nations continue to be jealous of their own advantage alone, they will jeopardize their highest values, sacrificing the pursuit of excellence to the acquisition of possessions (Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*). The world's wealth is growing in absolute terms, but inequalities are on the increase...it should be stressed that progress of a merely economic and technological kind is insufficient. Development needs above all to be true and integral. (Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, 22, 23).

Jesus asks the people in the Gospel, and also to us, 'look at what you do'. Are our values in order? The social teaching of the church echoes the teaching of Jesus and offers us vital parameters to order our values.

- This 101st World Day of Migrant and Refugees let us be aware that 51.3 million people are displaced globally;
- Three million refugees have been produced by the Syrian war;
- Six and a half million, or one-third, of Syrian people are displaced;
- Half of these refugees are children.

As people of faith, are our values in order? What do the values of today's Gospel say to us as we celebrate World Day of Migrants and Refugees in Australia?

Father Maurizio Pettina CS
National Director of Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office

SUGGESTED PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Response:

Lord hear our prayer

For the Church, Mother to all:

That in the midst of divisions, prejudices and conflict she may be the sacrament of communion for all people. We pray to the Lord:

For the Holy Father Pope Francis:

That his ministry may continue to teach us all how to become more and more doers of the Word and not merely listeners. We pray to the Lord:

For the Leaders of the Nations of the world:

That they may actively promote peace amongst all nations and people. We pray to the Lord:

We pray for the Leaders of our Country:

Australia, which shines with the precious gifts of our traditional owners and of all who through the centuries have come across the seas, that they may enact policies of dialogue and understanding, of welcome and solidarity. We pray to the Lord:

We pray for refugees, with particular attention to unaccompanied minors:

Who are forced to escape violence, war and persecution in the hopes of finding a safe home and brighter future. That we may become ever more aware of their plight and do all within our power to bring shed light and truth of their situation to our wider society. We pray to the Lord:

We pray for all migrants, and the families of migrants left behind:

Who, through the years, have graced Australia with the gifts of their lives, culture, work and their faith. May we be attentive to the needs of migrants in our communities and become witnesses to the Gospel of Christ. We pray to the Lord:

For those who provided care and safety to migrants in our community:

May they be strengthened by the promise of the Gospel, that whatever they do the least is done to Jesus Christ himself. We pray to the Lord.

For the dead:

In particular all those who have died seeking a better life. We particularly keep in mind, those who have perished in our seas and oceans in recent times. May God, who sees all, welcome them to everlasting life, and bring comfort to their families. We pray to the Lord.



John Baptist Scalabrini
(1839 - 1905). Bishop of
Piacenza, Italy

Proclaimed universal “Father to
Migrants and Refugees”

(Pope St John Paul II, 9 November 1997)

“The Catholic Church is called by its divine apostolate and by its age-old tradition to make its imprint on the great social movement of migration”. (Scalabrini, Memorandum, 1905).

John Baptist Scalabrini was born in Fino Mornasco (Como) on July 8, 1839, to Luigi and Colomba Scalabrini. He was the third of eight children. Scalabrini entered the Seminary of St. Abbondio in October 1857 and was ordained a priest on 30 May, 1863. He became vice rector of the seminary and then its rector, an office he held until 1870.

On 12 May, 1870, Fr Scalabrini was appointed pastor of St. Bartholomew Parish in Como. During these years he initiated numerous activities and wrote his *Piccolo Catechismo* (the Little Catechism), published in 1875. In the history of catechetical instruction in Italy, it is considered a revolutionary work.

On January 30, 1876, he was consecrated Bishop of Piacenza, where he remained bishop until his death. Among the principal elements of his ministry was the Eucharist, which Bishop Scalabrini considered the irreplaceable instrument for a forthcoming, radical renewal of Church and society.

As bishop, Scalabrini dedicated much time and attention to the care of the clergy, the formation of seminarians and the promotion of lay participation in the life of the local Church. He made five pastoral visitations of his whole diocese, which then numbered 241,000 inhabitants, many of whom lived in rural mountains, reaching the most inaccessible places, traveling by mule.

Bishop Scalabrini experienced the impulse of becoming involved with migrants when one day in Milan he was going through the train station teeming with migrants, “children of destitution and labour”. From his first pastoral visit to his Diocese, he had collected statistical data on emigration telling him that almost 12% of the faithful were migrating towards Europe and America; and, consequently, he began asking himself: “What to do”?

In response, Scalabrini founded a Religious Congregation of Men, the Missionaries of St Charles Borromeo in 1887, and one of Women, the Missionary Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo in 1895, in order to follow migrants to their destination. Bishop Scalabrini realised, that without one’s culture (language, history, priests, saints, popular devotions, feasts, etc.) even the faith in time disappeared.

Scalabrini did not limit his interventions to care for immediate necessities. With discerning vision, he conceived a concept and vision of migration, still relevant today, requiring involvement at the political, social, and religious level.

Blessed Scalabrini lived the drama of the exodus of migrants who traveled in great numbers from Europe to countries in the Americas. He saw clearly the need for a specific pastoral care of migrants through a suitable network of spiritual assistance. He strongly supported the need for legislative and institutional instruments for the human and juridical protection of migrants against all forms of exploitation. Today, the spiritual sons and daughters of Bishop Scalabrini continue to give witness to Christ’s love for migrants and to offer them the Gospel.

The concrete structure Bishop Scalabrini envisioned for a worldwide coordination of the spiritual care of all uprooted people was presented in the proposal he submitted to Pope St Pius X of a Commission for Catholic Migrants in the Roman Curia.

Three weeks before his death on 1 June 1905, Scalabrini sent a “Memorial” to the Pope in which, suggested the constitution of a Roman Congregation “For Catholic

Migrants”. In 1912, Pope St Pius X, entrusted to the Consistorial Congregation (responsible for all the Bishops of the world) the pastoral care of migrants in the world. Years later, Pope St John Paul II instituted what is now known as the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People.

Blessed Scalabrini stands out as a milestone in the Church’s pastoral care of migrants, and this is confirmed by the fact that his name appears in the three leading documents of the Magisterium on migration: *Exsul familia* (1952), *De pastoralis migratorum cura* (1969), and *Church and Human Mobility* (1978).

The writings and projects of Blessed Scalabrini are marked by a sense of urgency to meet situations of exploitation, human degradation, physical and moral pain. The insight of the moment, the essence of the message, the conviction that Providence would bring to maturity the little seeds thrown into the furrow of history, are the characteristics of Blessed Scalabrini, together with patience and an iron will in pursuing the realization of his program as far as his energy would allow it.

Addressing the pilgrims present at the Beatification in Rome, Pope St John Paul II said: “*Blessed John Baptist Scalabrini shines today as an example of a pastor with a sensitive and open heart. Through his wonderful work for the People of God, Bishop Scalabrini tried to lessen the material and spiritual wounds of his many brothers and sisters forced to live far from their homeland. He supported them in defending the human person’s fundamental rights and he wished to help them to live the obligations of their Christian faith. As an authentic “Father of migrants” he worked to sensitize communities to offering a respectful, open and supportive welcome. He was convinced that, through their presence, migrants are a visible sign of the universality of the family of God and they can help create the indispensable bases for that authentic meeting of peoples which is the fruit of the Spirit of Pentecost*” (JPII, 10 November 1997).

(Courtesy of: www.scalabrini.org)

NOTES

NOTES

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