I Was A Stranger
Until you Welcomed Me...
Minor migrants & refugees
96th WORLD DAY OF
migrants & refugees
MIGRANT AND REFUGEE WEEK 23RD – 29TH AUGUST 2010
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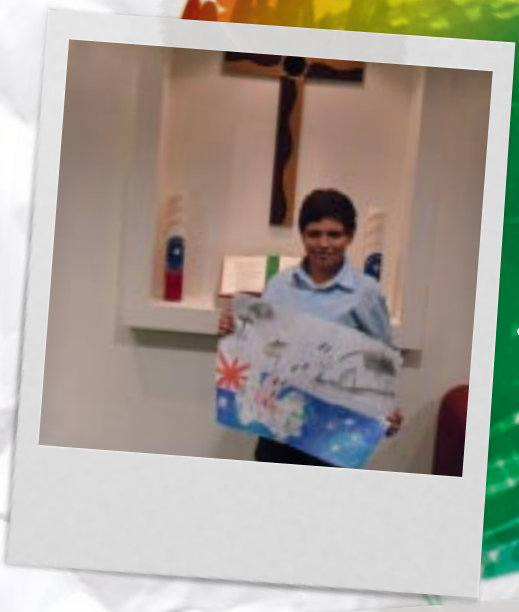


POSTER competition

This resource kit builds on the theme of minor migrants and refugees contained in Pope Benedict's message for Migrant and Refugee Day 2010. The kit's cover page and the posters inside were designed by the children from the St Therese School in Mascot, Sydney. Appropriately, the school is highly multicultural and many of the children have migrant backgrounds. After a difficult selection process, four of the best posters were chosen to be showcased in this year's resource kit. These works were designed by Ava Atzemis, Zoe Lara, Johann Da Silva and Grace Hayes. The poster which was chosen as the cover page was created by Ava Atzemis. According to this talented artist, the tree on her poster represents a dividing line. The one side of the tree with dead leaves represents the dark side of life for migrants and refugees with the line 'I was a stranger'. The other side of the tree, with green leaves, represents hope in the form of Australia and the sentence is completed with 'UNTIL you welcomed me'. We would like to thank all the children from St Therese for their exceptional creativity and special thanks to Principal Geoffrey Carey who displayed great enthusiasm for this project.

St Therese School Mascot Profile

Mission

At St Therese's Mascot the school community works together to provide a stimulating and challenging environment in which students grow in knowledge and understanding of their Catholic faith.

All students are encouraged and supported to achieve success in their learning and develop skills that empower them to make a difference in their world.

Priorities

Priority 1: Religious and Spiritual Dimension of School Life

At St. Therese's Mascot, we believe that our school community is one where authentic Australian Catholic values are an integral part of our curriculum and relationships; and where members are encouraged and challenged to make a difference.

Priority 2: Curriculum Development and Teaching Practice

At St. Therese's Mascot, we believe that informed curriculum development, modelled and explicit teaching practice challenge and enhance student learning.

Priority 3: Students' Learning, Development, Progress and Achievement

At St. Therese's Mascot, we believe that students learn best and experience success when learning needs are catered for and are encouraged and supported to share responsibility for aspects of their own learning.

Priority 4: Pastoral Care Within the School Community

At St. Therese's Mascot, we believe that students learn best in a collaborative community that values and respects the dignity, self-esteem and well being of all members.

Priority 5: School, Families, Parish and Wider Community in Partnership

At St. Therese's Mascot, we believe that quality teaching and learning is supported by a sense of belonging and respectful relationships within an effective network of school, families, parish and the wider community.

Priority 6: Facilities, Resources and Day-to-Day Management

At St. Therese's Mascot, we believe that teaching and learning will be most effective within a well-managed environment that is safe, secure, functional, stimulating and appropriately resourced.

Background

Mascot Parish was established under the name of Botany in 1885. In 1940 the new school and church opened on the present site under the patronage of St Therese of Liseux. The school was staffed and administered by the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart until 1981. Since then the school has been staffed and administered by lay teachers. This team has carried on the fine traditions of educational excellence established by the Daughters of OLSH.

The school campus consists of 21 well-equipped classrooms and special purpose rooms, a well-resourced library, administration and staff facilities block, a large outdoor assembly area, canteen and parish hall. The school is currently undergoing a total refurbishment and rebuilding, which should be completed by end of 2009.

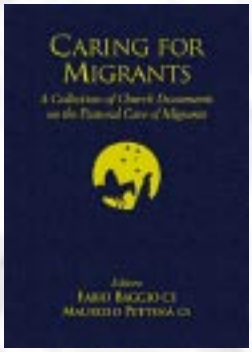
Mascot is a traditional working class suburb surrounded by heavy industry and transport infrastructure. The school community is highly multicultural, with many new arrivals. Many families would fall within the lower bands of socio-economic scales.

Students

St Therese's is a three-stream school catering to the educational needs of boys and girls from Kindergarten to Year 6. At the February Census there were 583 students enrolled in the school.

School Community

Underlying all that we do at St Therese's is the support given by the parents, thus making the home/ school partnership a strong and valuable one. The parents give of their time by assisting their children at home and in the day-to-day happenings at school. Areas in which this support is given include attending school celebrations and activities, assisting in classrooms, accompanying children on activities outside the school, working in the library, supporting the work of the Parents & Friends Association and working in the canteen. Regular workshops are arranged for parents to assist their understanding of the totality of Catholic education. All forms of parental support are important to the school.



CARING FOR MIGRANTS:
A COLLECTION OF CHURCH DOCUMENTS ON THE PASTORAL CARE OF MIGRANTS

Over the years, the Catholic Church has been in the forefront in providing practical assistance and guiding principles in ministering to people on the move. The motivation for this direct and positive involvement stems from the words of Jesus, "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Matthew 25:35). This is particularly true of the Catholic Church in our country, Australia. The Catholic community has been closely and constantly guided to walk with and provide whatever help might be necessary to ensure that people who seek to make Australia their home could make a peaceful and fruitful transition.

This book has two (2) sections: A section dedicated to the Universal Magisterium introduces a selection of documents, which have been instrumental in shaping the pastoral care of migrants of the Catholic Church. Many of the pastoral programs implemented worldwide derive inspiration from these documents. The selected documents were authored by popes (from Pius XII to Benedict XVI), the Vatican Council II, Vatican Congregations, Pontifical Councils and Commissions. They range from apostolic constitutions to messages and they carry varying degrees of authority, from canonical rules to pastoral exhortations, but each one of them contributed to the development of the migrant ministry.

A section on the Local Magisterium includes pastoral letters and official statements dealing directly with migration-related matter. These documents express the local ordinary Magisterium, which contextualizes the indications provided at the universal level. They are authored by Bishops' Conferences and Episcopal Commissions in United States, Australia and Asia. The geographical coverage of the selection was determined by the cooperation of the above-mentioned institutions in realizing this project.

There are four parts in this collection: the first part is dedicated to the Universal Magisterium, the second to the Magisterium in the United States, the third to the Magisterium in Australia and the fourth to the Magisterium in Asia. Each part is introduced by a commentary authored by selected scholars. An index of subjects is added at the end to facilitate the consultation of the documents. This collection is a useful reference to those in the migrant ministry and to all Catholics who are called to care for migrants.

To order this publication, please email adminassistant@acmro.catholic.org.au or write to the Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office at PO Box 2720, Canberra, ACT, 2601.

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The migration phenomenon has grown to take on the dimension of the entire world being the common denominator of almost 200 million people.

"Minor Migrants & Refugees"

Migrant and Refugee Week 23rd – 29th August 2010

96th World Day of Migrants and Refugees

The Catholic Church in Australia is the one most impacted by the phenomenon of migration.

"How do we welcome all of this diversity in our midst so to grow even stronger as one and avoid the risk of becoming fragmented and each going its way?"

message

of His Holiness Benedict XVI

for the 96th World Day of Migrants & Refugees (2010)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The celebration of the World Day of Migrants and Refugees once again gives me the opportunity to express the Church's constant concern for those who, in different ways, experience a life of emigration. This is a phenomenon which, as I wrote in the Encyclical Caritas in Veritate, upsets us due to the number of people involved and the social, economic, political, cultural and religious problems it raises on account of the dramatic challenges it poses to both national and international communities. The migrant is a human person who possesses fundamental, inalienable rights that must be respected by everyone and in every circumstance (cf. n. 62).

This year's theme – "Minor migrants and refugees" – touches an aspect that Christians view with great attention, remembering the warning of Christ who at the Last Judgement will consider as directed to himself everything that has been done or denied "to one of the least of these" (cf. Mt 25:40, 45). And how can one fail to consider migrant and refugee minors as also being among the "least"? As a child, Jesus himself experienced migration for, as the Gospel recounts, in order to flee the threats of Herod, he had to seek refuge in Egypt together with Joseph and Mary (cf. Mt 2:14).

While the Convention on the Rights of the Child clearly states that the best interests of the minor shall always be safeguarded (cf. Art. 3, 1), recognizing his or her fundamental human rights as equal to the rights of adults, unfortunately this does not always happen in practice.

Although there is increasing public awareness of the need for immediate and incisive action to protect minors, nevertheless, many are left to themselves and, in various ways, face the risk of exploitation. My venerable Predecessor, John Paul II, voiced the dramatic situation in which they live in the Message he addressed to the Secretary General of the United Nations on 22 September 1990, on the occasion of the World Summit for Children.

"I am a witness of the heart-breaking plight of millions of children on every continent. They are most vulnerable, because they are least able to make their voice heard" (L'Osservatore Romano, English edition, 1 October 1990, p. 13). I warmly hope that proper attention will be given to minor migrants who need a social environment that permits and fosters their physical, cultural, spiritual and moral development. Living in a foreign land without effective points of reference generates countless and sometimes serious hardships and difficulties for them, especially those deprived of the support of their family.

A typical aspect of the migration of minors is the situation of children born in the host country or of those who do not live with their parents, who emigrated after their birth, but join them later. These adolescents belong to two cultures with all the advantages and problems attached to their dual background, a condition that can nevertheless offer them the opportunity to experience the wealth of an encounter between different cultural traditions. It is important that these young people be given the possibility of attending school and subsequently of being integrated into the world of work, and that their social integration be facilitated by appropriate educational and social structures. It should never be forgotten that adolescence constitutes a fundamental phase for the formation of human beings.

A particular category of minors is that of refugees seeking asylum, who, for various reasons, are fleeing their own country, where they are not given adequate protection. Statistics show that their numbers are increasing. This is therefore a phenomenon that calls for careful evaluation and coordinated action by implementing appropriate measures of prevention, protection and welcome, as set forth in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (cf. Art. 22).

I now turn in particular to parishes and to the many Catholic associations which, imbued with a spirit of faith and charity, take pains to meet the needs of these brothers and sisters of ours. While I express gratitude for all that is being done with great generosity, I would like to invite all Christians to become aware of the social and pastoral challenges posed by migrant and refugee minors.

Jesus' words resound in our hearts: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Mt 25:35), as, likewise, the central commandment he left us: to love God with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our mind, but together with love of neighbour (cf. Mt 22:37-39).

This leads us to consider that any of our concrete interventions must first be nurtured by faith in the action of grace and divine Providence. In this way also hospitality and solidarity to strangers, especially if they are children, become a proclamation of the Gospel of solidarity. The Church proclaims this when she opens her arms and strives to have the rights of migrants and refugees respected, moving the leaders of Nations, and those in charge of international organizations and institutions to promote opportune initiatives for their support.

May the Blessed Virgin Mary watch over us all and help us to understand the difficulties faced by those who are far from their homeland. I assure all those who are involved in the vast world of migrants and refugees of my prayers and cordially impart to them the Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 16 October 2009.

BENEDICTUS PP. XVI

message

of Bishop Joseph Grech

for the Australia Day of Migrants & Refugees (2010)

1 June 2010

Dear Friends,

Peace and blessings to all. Once again the Church in Australia prepares to celebrate Migrant and Refugee Week. This is now the third year we prepare a kit so that all of us can find some ideas and some help during this week to pray, reflect and celebrate as a community the diversified cultural experiences which are so much part and parcel of the everyday multi-cultural richness of the Catholic Church in Australia.

"The Minor Migrants and Refugees" is the theme of Pope Benedict XVI's message on the occasion of the 96th World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2010 that, in most Dioceses in Australia, will be celebrated on the last Sunday in August 2010 (August 29 2010).

This theme is certainly not easy to reflect upon as the reality of child migrants and refugees is a delicate issue that needs much attention both at national and at international level. Migration is studied more from the point of view of adults than it is from the point of view of children and minors in general.

A child migrant and refugee is a human being and also a juridical person carrying values and rights.

To speak of children and minors implies that much consideration needs to be given to the needs of family and the plight for family reunification, the right to education and recreation, the role of parents and community, the multi-cultural project of a society, the knowledge and appreciation of their cultural backgrounds, their family roots and their religious education. Their experience of migration is often a dramatic one. The Pope's message calls the attention also on children left behind by their parents who need to emigrate to other countries; even these are victims of the pains of emigration.

There are various types, so to speak of minor migrants; the difficulties faced by these children are similar, in some respects, but also different from those encountered by adults.

Recent studies by UNICEF ("Children in Immigrant Families in Eight Affluent Countries, August 2009") analyse the presence of immigrant children in countries such as the United States of America, Australia, and six European countries. The study affirms that children born from at least one immigrant parent form a significant part of the total number of the children who live in these countries. 39 % in Switzerland; 33 % in Australia; and 26 %, in Germany, while in the United States and the Netherlands they are the 22 %. These children sum to 17 % in the United Kingdom, 16 % in France, while in Italy are just 10 %.

Some children may emigrate from countries such as Africa or Asia and Eastern Europe. The study notes that in Australia the 10 % (47.311) come from the Philippines and 14 % (62.909) from Vietnam.

Special pastoral concern needs to be given to those children who emigrate because of war, ethnic or religious conflicts and economic necessities and children who are kept in refugees' detention centres. Australia is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 37 of the Convention states that holding children in detention shall be used as a measure of last resort and only for the shortest time possible.

The Pope says: *"A particular category of minors is that of refugees seeking asylum, who, for various reasons, are fleeing their own country, where they are not given adequate protection. Statistics show that their numbers are increasing. This is therefore a phenomenon that calls for careful evaluation and coordinated action by implementing appropriate measures of prevention, protection and welcome, as set forth in the Convention on the Rights of the Child"* (cf. Art. 31).

Children often become the target of shameful exploitation. It is necessary to undertake and promote the welfare of all of them. Unfortunately, says Pope Benedict XVI in his message, while there is a growing awareness among the general public, there is still the need for timely and effective action to protect minors, as so many are left abandoned and find themselves at risk of exploitation .

Pastoral concern urges us to implement initiatives with the aim to educate the community on the reality of minor migrants and refugees present in our communities, in detention camps and throughout Australia.

I call on Dioceses, parishes, associations and all people of good will to reach out to these minor migrants and refugees, making sure they find open hearts and open doors within our Christian communities.

Our parishes, ethnic chaplaincies and communities are committed to be places of welcome and safe growing for our migrant children, where they can experience the joy of a healthy childhood within our society and our Church.

At the same time, on behalf of the Bishops of Australia, I sincerely thank all those who dedicate their lives in welcoming and supporting migrants and refugees in our country. Thank you, for your generous and wonderful ministry!

And thank you very much to all child migrants, refugees and children of migrants who are such a wonderful part of our communities, and who help us all grow and appreciate the exciting culture of welcoming the differences in our midst.

The Scripture is a fantastic witness of the special preference God has for the "little ones". May we all become an active part of that preference.

Yours sincerely in Christ

+ Joseph Grech

Most Reverend Joseph Grech
Delegate for Migrants and Refugees
Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life

a guide to Understanding the Present Resource Kit to Celebrate Migrant and Refugee Week 2010

Do we need a kit to help celebrate Migrant and Refugee Week?

The Catholic Church in Australia is significantly impacted by the phenomenon of migration. It is a fact that our Catholic dioceses, parishes, schools, and organizations are becoming increasingly diverse. Some may feel excited about this – which is an inevitable reality – but others may struggle with all this diversity. From a pastoral point of view, one cannot avoid but ask the question: "How do we welcome all of this diversity in our midst so to grow even stronger as one and avoid the risk of becoming fragmented and each going its own way?"

Following the lead of Pope Benedict XVI, this year focus of attention is on the "minor migrants and refugees. Parish Priests, Teachers, Directors of Religious Education and other educators are called to a greater awareness of the presence of child migrants and refugees in our midst. All are called to welcome them, to listen to their stories and to learn from their experiences.

In Australia, we are truly blessed, because of the presence of many priests, religious brothers and sisters, pastoral associates and helpers who themselves come from various countries and culture enabling them to respond effectively to an otherwise little understood culture. This resource might help to reflect in community, groups and organizations.

Migration as a politicised issue

In recent time, the politics of immigration reform has become a burning issue on the Australian political scene and a prophetical opportunity for the Church. Australian society seems divided regarding the fate of migrants, refugees, asylum seekers coming to our country. Public concerns focus on the cultural and economic effect of their presence, the importance of controlling Australian borders and national security, and their influence on the shape of Australian identity. Immigration is negatively looked upon as a matter of national security, rather than a possibility for "widening the space of our tent" (Is 54,2). The Catholic Church has been very involved in this issue and consistently offers pastoral care to immigrants and refugees.

The primary purpose of this annual resource kit is to educate the public about Church teaching on migration and immigrants and to create a culture of welcoming. For 96 consecutive years, the Church has called attention to the global phenomenon of migration. The Church's main effort is that of emphasizing the human face of migrants and refugees. Perhaps, what is not widely known is the extensive involvement of the Church in Australia on immigration related issues and on related pastoral care. Parish Priests, Teachers, Directors of Religious Education and other educators, Directors of Multicultural Pastoral Care and Episcopal Vicars for Migrants and Refugees can use this resource in their parishes and in their in their classrooms as a way to highlight this topic: minor migrants and refugees.

The 2010 Kit

In staying with the theme of minor migrants and refugees, this year's kit takes the form of an educational resource primarily, but not exclusively, for children. The first six days of the week (Monday to Saturday) are each assigned a theme related to migrants and refugees. The themes are: Culture; Celebrating Diversity; Refugees, Asylum Seekers & Immigrants; Reaching out to Migrants & Refugees; Prejudice & Racism; and Treating Asylum Seekers with Compassion. Each theme is accompanied by a relevant scripture, educational information, activities and thoughts for reflection. Although we were reluctant to restrict the respective lessons to specific age groups, the Monday and Tuesday lessons are more appropriate for primary school children while the Wednesday to Saturday lessons will be more suitable for secondary school children as well as adults. The week concludes with the Sunday Homily prepared by Fr Sacha Bermudez-Goldman SJ.

Birthplace of Australian Children by Age Group (24 and under)

Birthplace	Age		
	0- 4	**5 – 14**	**15-24**
Australia	1,148,246	2,341,091	2,108,985
Austria	60	244	476
Bosnia and Herzegovina	37	1,205	4,480
Cambodia	83	586	2,687
Canada	502	2,188	3,397
Chile	91	472	1,917
China (excl. SARs and Taiwan Province)(b)	1,244	6,083	47,235
Croatia	32	703	2,846
Cyprus	22	153	256
Egypt	742	1,002	1,819
Fiji	260	2,379	6,151
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM)	63	555	2,071
France	264	924	1,569
Germany	444	2,368	3,350
Greece	133	806	1,398
Hong Kong (SAR of China)(b)	447	3,605	18,868
Hungary	26	149	389
India	2,465	8,235	21,726
Indonesia	642	2,935	12,427
Iran	149	1,572	3,208
Iraq	187	3,171	5,985
Ireland	391	980	2,671
Italy	184	744	1,255
Japan	730	2,397	4,766
Korea, Republic of (South)	1,014	5,615	11,617
Lebanon	341	1,565	5,076
Malaysia	616	3,395	19,200
Malta	21	189	283
Mauritius	70	298	1,787
Netherlands	318	1,050	1,104
New Zealand	5,813	34,475	45,586
Papua New Guinea	242	1,274	2,281
Philippines	1,180	7,426	16,199
Poland	66	426	2,353
Portugal	45	160	979
Romania	37	494	1,473
Russian Federation	86	736	2,090
Samoa	70	745	1,548
Singapore	801	3,756	7,725
South Africa	1,238	12,083	14,374
South Eastern Europe, nfd(c)	10	537	1,941
Spain	91	169	281
Sri Lanka	545	2,902	7,354
Taiwan	237	1,502	6,429
Thailand	510	2,651	7,223
Turkey	139	1,056	2,008
Ukraine	27	319	1,120
United Kingdom(d)	7,558	31,775	35,964
United States of America	2,310	6,944	7,403
Viet Nam	650	2,365	12,884
Born elsewhere(e)	6,293	30,814	54,304
Country of birth not stated	72,634	137,541	173,750
Total	**1,260,406**	**2,676,809**	**2,704,268**

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2006

monday

Culture

What is Culture?

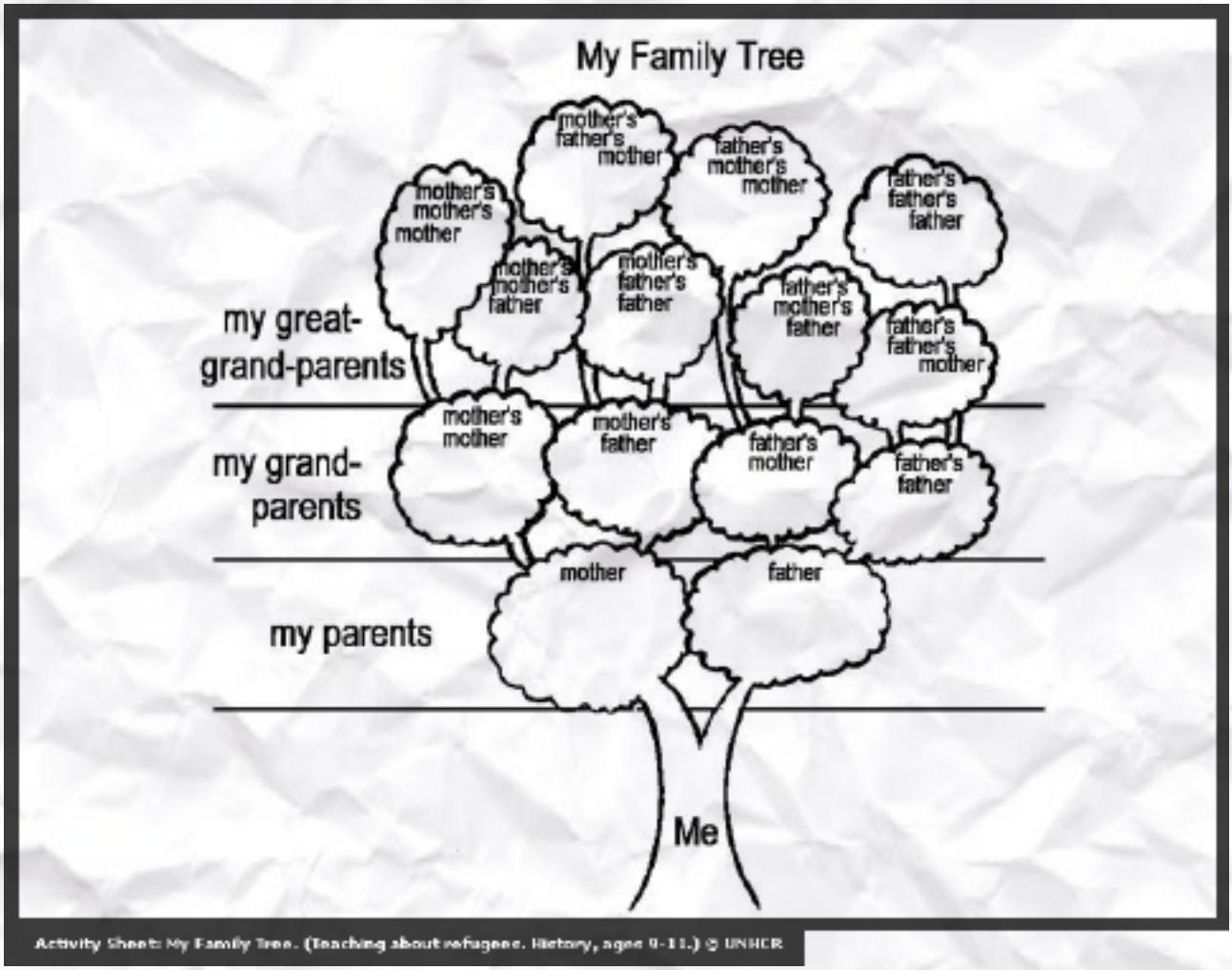
- Culture can be described as the different ways in which families and groups of people live, work and play together.
- There are many elements of culture, such as language, food, music, art, history and religion.
- Culture is a gift because it helps us know who we are.

Acts 2: 1-12

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. Utterly amazed, they asked: Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs-we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

Exercise

Complete the family tree with the aid of your parents and/or grandparents. Include information about the countries your ancestors came from and, if possible, why they moved.



Activity Sheet: My Family Tree. (Teaching about refugees. History, ages 9-11.) © UNHCR

Questions for reflection:

1) What is your family name?
2) Which country/countries does your family come from?
3) Does your family observe any special customs? For example, marriages, holidays, birthdays, deaths.
4) Are there any special meals or dishes that your family likes to prepare?
5) Are there any family stories you have learned from grandparents or parents?

tuesday

Celebrating Diversity

What is Diversity?

- Diversity refers to differences between people and their cultures.
- Diversity is a quality to be respected and celebrated.
- Australia is a very diverse country.

Corinthians 1:14-18

> For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose.

Exercise

Tasks

Quiz:

1) Which of these foods is part of Italian culture?
   A) Pizza
   B) Hotdogs
   C) Tacos

2) What language do people from the Vietnam speak?
   A) English
   B) Vietnamese
   C) Spanish

3) Which instrument is made by indigenous Australians?
   A) Flute
   B) Guitar
   C) Didgeridoo

Greetings

Italian	**"Ciao" (chow)**
Chinese	**"Ni hao ma" (nee how ma)**
Vietnamese	**"Chao" (chow)**
Spanish	**"Què tal" (ke tal)**
Hindi	**"Namaste" (nam mas tay)**
Philippines	**"Mabuhay" (ma boo hi)**

Questions for reflection:

1) How many different cultures or nationalities can you name?
2) Can you describe at least one characteristic for each of these cultures, eg. Food, language, dance, music.
3) Do you make an effort to speak to your class mates or friends about their cultural background?

wednesday

Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Immigrants

Understanding the terminology

- **Refugees** are people who flee their country out of fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group.
- **Asylum Seekers** have fled their own country and applied for protection as refugees. They are classed as asylum seekers until their claim for refugee status has been determined.
- **Internally Displaced Persons** have been forced (due to conflict, persecution or natural disasters, etc.) to leave their homes and flee to another part of that country. Although they remain in their country, they are often forced to live in conditions similar to refugee camps.
- **Migrants** are people who move from one region or country to another.
- **Immigrants** are people who move from one country to settle permanently in another country.

Matthew 2: 13 - 15

When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him." So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son."

Sudan to Australia - Achok's Journey

Sussy Achok Deng, 26, was born in southern Sudan in a region devastated by civil war. Achok still remembers sitting in church one day as a small child when Government troops arrived and ordered her father and other village leaders outside. Achok's father and all the other men were executed on the spot. Later, Achok's village was bombed by Government aeroplanes.

"I remember running as bombs fell on my school and across the town," Achok says. "I saw my friends being injured and even killed as I was running for my life into the bush." Achok fled with her sisters, first to a refugee camp in Ethiopia and then to Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya. The refugee camp became her home for the next 12 years. "Kakuma is a hot, dusty place, with very little hope," she says. "We lived in mud huts with thatched roofs, dependent on food aid from the United Nations. There were no jobs and no shops, so if the food ran out we simply had to wait for the next distribution. Sometimes we were starving. I wore the same dress for a whole year, because it was all I had. It was a terrible way to live, and my life felt meaningless."

Achok applied three times for a humanitarian visa to go to another country. "I wanted to leave Kakuma, even though I didn't know anything about these other places," Achok says. Just before Achok's seventeenth birthday, she was relieved and grateful to hear that she and her two sisters had been accepted for settlement in Australia.

"I was excited to be offered the opportunity to come to Australia. I wanted a chance to study, to work, and to have a better life than all those years in the refugee camp. Everyone deserved to leave Kakuma, but not everyone was accepted by other countries. There are still people living in that terrible place today, and I feel sad when I remember how they are."

Source: Simply Sharing Week 2010

Exercise

Study these passages on refugees and immigrants and answer the questions that follow.

There have been **refugees** throughout history. Where there is persecution or human rights violations resulting from armed conflict, people flee to save their lives. Where there is armed conflict or war, people try to escape to safety. Moses led the people of Israel out of bondage in Egypt to a Promised Land. Joseph, Mary and the infant Jesus fled to Egypt, to escape the persecution of King Herod. Every year more than 13,000 refugees settle in Australia.

Immigrants have been coming to Australia for hundreds of years. Almost a quarter of the current Australian population were born overseas. People immigrate for a number of reasons. Some move because their occupation demands it, others follow their husbands or wives and many make the decision to move for economic reasons. Immigrants and refugees have brought many benefits to Australia, including economic, cultural and spiritual benefits. One need only look to the example of Australia's first saint, Blessed Mary MacKillop, whose parents immigrated to Australia from Scotland.

1) Name three possible reasons why refugees and immigrants leave their countries of origin?
2) Besides the above-mentioned examples try and name three more instances (historical or biblical) where individuals or groups were either forced or decided to move from the place where they had settled?

Questions for reflection:

1) Why is Australia an attractive destination for refugees and immigrants?
2) In what way could you help newly arrived refugees and immigrants feel welcome in Australia?
3) In your everyday life, do you notice any benefits brought by immigrant communities to Australia?

thursday

Reaching out to migrants and refugees

The Catholic tradition of reaching out to migrants and refugees

- The Catholic Church has a strong tradition of **reaching out** to migrant and refugee groups by emphasising an attitude of hospitality and respect for all people.
- **Reaching out** to migrants and refugees forms part of Jesus' message to 'Love your Neighbour'.
- There are a number of organisations within the Australian Catholic Church which assist in **reaching out** to refugee and migrant communities.

Genesis 18: 1 - 8

> The LORD appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day. Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground. He said, "If I have found favour in your eyes, my lord do not pass your servant by. Let a little water be brought, and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree. Let me get you something to eat, so you can be refreshed and then go on your way—now that you have come to your servant." "Very well," they answered, "do as you say." So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah. "Quick," he said, "get three seahs of fine flour and knead it and bake some bread." Then he ran to the herd and selected a choice, tender calf and gave it to a servant, who hurried to prepare it. He then brought some curds and milk and the calf that had been prepared, and set these before them. While they ate, he stood near them under a tree.

Exercise

Students are encouraged to reach out by engaging in one of the following reaching out activities:

1) Write a letter of support to asylum seekers currently in detention awaiting a decision on their applications.*
2) Create a home video or an audio podcast containing a message of hope for a migrant or refugee arriving in Australia.*
3) Create a community blog providing useful information to newly arrived migrants, i.e. Best places to shop, location of libraries, useful bus routes, etc.

Questions for reflection:

1) Do you actively reach out to migrant groups in your community?
2) Are there any structures in place in your community to formally welcome newly-arrived migrants?

** Letters and podcasts can be sent to the Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office at:*
Email: adminassistant@acmro.ctholic.org.au
Mail: GPO Box 2720 Canberra ACT 2601

Some of the Catholic Agencies which reach out to migrants and refugees

National

Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office
National Director: Fr Maurizio Pettená CS
GPO Box 2720,
Canberra ACT 2601
Tel: (02) 6201 9848
Fax: (02) 6247 7466
Email: adminassistant@acmro.catholic.org.au

Jesuit Refugee Service
Director: Fr Sasha Bermudez-Goldman SJ
PO Box 522,
Kings Cross, NSW 1340
Tel: (02) 9356 3888
Fax: (02) 9356 3021
Email: info@jrs.org.au

Australian Catholic Social Justice Council
National Executive Officer: John Ferguson
PO Box 7246,
Alexandria NSW 2015
Tel: (02) 8306 3499
Fax: (02) 8306 3498
Email: admin@acsjc.org.au

Centrecare
PO Box 326,
Curtin ACT 2605
Tel: (02) 6285 1366
Fax: (02) 6285 2399

Local

Sydney
Catholic Immigration Office
Episcopal Vicar for Migration: Fr Dominic Ceresoli CS
Executive Director: Sr Anne Laidlaw DC
Level 16, Polding Centre, 133 Liverpool Street
Sydney NSW 2000
Tel: (02) 9390 5148
Fax: (02) 9264 5093
Email: immigration@sydney.catholic.org.au

Melbourne
Melbourne Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office
Episcopal Vicar for Migration: Fr Delmar Silva CS
Executive Officer: Brenda Hubber
PO Box 146,
East Melbourne Vic 3002
Tel: (03) 9926 5677 or 03 9926 5720
Fax: (03) 9926 5617
Email: mcmro@melbourne.catholic.org.au

Brisbane
Centre for Multicultural Pastoral Care
Director: Clyde Cosentino
PO Box 112,
Paddington Qld 4064
Tel: (07) 3109 6810
Fax: (07) 3109 6829
Email: cmpc@bne.catholic.net.au

Adelaide
Multicultural Pastoral Service
Representative: Sr Nien Tran RSM
39 Wakefield Street
Adelaide SA 5000
Tel: (08) 8210 9358
Fax: (08) 8223 3880
Email: ntran@adelaide.catholic.org.au

Perth
Episcopal Vicar for Migration: Fr Blasco Fonseca
Immaculate Conception Parish,
154 Canning Highway, East Fremantle WA 6158
Tel: (08) 9339 2530; (08) 9438 3704
Fax: (08) 9319 8156
Email: fremantle_immaculate@westnet.com.au

Darwin
Representative: Fr Paul Webb
PO Box 40241,
Casuarina NT 0811
Tel: (08) 8945 3633
Fax: (08) 8945 3700
Email: paulwebb44@bigpond.com

Prejudice and Racism

We often claim not to be prejudiced, but in all honesty most of us have pre-judgement stirring within us and affecting our attitudes and behaviour. These pre-judgments can be based on cultural or religious differences or even on economic status. It is thus important to recognise these buried resentments, so as to limit their subliminal influence and power.

Understanding key terms

- **Prejudice**: A preconceived judgment or opinion.
- **Racism**: Discrimination based on the belief that some races are superior to others.
- **Ethnocentrism**: A tendency to view alien groups or cultures in terms of one's own; the belief in the inherent superiority of one's own group or culture, accompanied by a feeling of contempt for other groups and cultures.
- **Stereotype**: A standardised picture that is held in common by members of a group and that represents an oversimplified opinion, affective attitude, or critical judgement.
- **Xenophobia**: The fear of or contempt for strangers and foreigners.

Galatians 3: 26 - 29

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Activities

1) Together with your friends and/or classmates, keep a journal for two weeks noting the ways in which you recognise racism, prejudice, stereotyping, xenophobia, and ethnocentrism in yourself and in others. After two weeks share some of the stories with your friends and/or class mates.

2) Working in groups, look through newspapers for stories, cartoons and pictures, which show examples of racism, prejudice, stereotyping, xenophobia, or ethnocentrism towards immigrants or culturally diverse people. Discuss these stories in the groups and try and find answers to the following questions.
   - How can we quell such waves of anti-foreigner sentiment?
   - What can we do as individuals?
   - What can we do as a group of committed students?
   - What needs to be done by our government?

3) Read the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke10:25-37) and do some research on the context of this story. Answer the following questions.
   - Who were the Samaritans and how were they perceived in society?
   - How do you think the parable made those listening to it feel?
   - Who are the Samaritans in contemporary culture?

Questions for reflection:

- Have you honestly assessed your own attitudes of those who are different to you?
- What would your response be to a friend or family member making a racial slur or joke?

saturday

Treating Asylum Seekers with compassion

In recent months a growing number of asylum seekers have tried to reach Australia by boat. The issue has become increasingly politicised in an election year. Below is the official media release from the Australian Catholics Bishops Conference, calling for a more humane approach in our treatment of asylum seekers.

Matthew 25: 31 - 36

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

10 May, 2010

Bishops call on government to show compassionate leadership on asylum seekers

Refugees are desperate human beings who have suffered great trauma. As a nation, we are called to respond with justice and compassion say the Catholic Bishops of Australia.

This week, as the Catholic Bishops of Australia meet in Sydney, they have called on the government to lift the suspension of processing for Afghan and Sri Lankan asylum seekers.

The Bishops call on all sides of politics to show positive leadership on refugee policy,

"Mandatory detention, especially in remote places such as Christmas Island and Curtin RAAF base, as the government indicates, is a costly exercise that adds to the trauma already endured by people seeking asylum. It also creates stress for staff who are doing what they can under difficult circumstances", the Bishops said.

"Political leaders have a particular responsibility to avoid demonizing or stereotyping asylum seekers.

"While aware of the complexities of the issue and the challenges presented, but conscious of the need to avoid using asylum seekers being used as political capital, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference asks political parties to confer in order to formulate a policy on the treatment of asylum seekers that does justice to their human dignity", they said.

"Australia is not being inundated by people seeking asylum. In fact we receive only a small proportion of the world's displaced people. The greatest burden in giving shelter to refugees is borne by countries that are far poorer and more crowded than Australia", the Bishops said.

"Australia was among the first nations to sign the refugee convention and has benefited from the energy and enterprise of 750,000 refugees since federation.

"We should keep faith with this history. In the past, Australia has established humane and constructive policies towards asylum seekers – for example, during the 1980s when boat people were fleeing from Vietnam and Cambodia."That past reveals that Australia can rise above its current response to once more act with compassion and justice towards these vulnerable people", the Bishops said.

Questions for reflection

- Are we showing enough compassion to asylum seekers or do we tend to forget the human dimension to this issue?
- How would like to be received in another country if you were ever forced to seek asylum?

Materials were prepared with the assistance of the following sources:

- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- Simply Sharing Week
- Religious Education Team, Catholic Education Office, South Australia.
- Melbourne Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office
- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
- Caring for Migrants, Fabio Baggio CS and Maurizio Pettená CS

Suggested Homily

The Sunday Homily for this years Migrant and Refugee Sunday was prepared by Sacha Bermudez-Goldman. Fr Sacha was ordained to the priesthood on June 30, 2007. He joined the Society of Jesus in February 1999. Originally from Nicaragua, Sacha moved to the United States for his secondary school and university studies. He did a Masters in Engineering in Texas and worked as an engineer for a few years. He then joined an American missionary society and served as a lay missionary teacher for seven years in Tanzania (East Africa) and Cambodia. During his first year after ordination Sacha was involved in Magis, the Ignatian young adult ministry as Victoria coordinator, and the Magis08 program for World Youth Day. He was appointed director of Jesuit Refugee Service Australia in August of 2008".

Today we celebrate Migrant and Refugee Sunday. This annual celebration is an invitation to us as Christians to reflect, through the lens of our faith, on the lives, challenges and contributions of peoples from around the world who have left their homelands to come to Australia. Whether they have left their countries in peace or war, at times of conflict or prosperity, voluntarily or persecuted, they have all arrived with a common purpose: to make Australia their new home—a place where they can feel they belong and are welcome.

The continual arrival of migrants, and refugees in particular, gives rise to strong emotions. Some people believe that Australia already has a 'large enough' population, while others argue that this nation has been built on the shoulders of migrants, and that the fact that some of us arrived here first, does not mean that we should exclude others.

In today's gospel, Jesus notices those guests who, arriving first at the banquet, inevitable go for the higher, more honorable places. His counsel to them, presented in the form of a parable, advices that they should in fact choose the lower places, so that when the inevitable rearrangement of seats according to rank takes place, they will not be humiliated by being requested to move to a lower spot. In first century Palestinian society, feelings of honour and shame ran deeply in the psyche of Jesus' listeners, so the loss of face involved in such a request would have caused deep mortification and embarrassment.

Jesus' maxim: "For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted" is a cautionary reminder that reversals of fortune are not uncommon, and those who are ahead or privileged today, might be left behind or marginalized tomorrow. It further evokes another of Jesus' rather mysterious cautionary statements: 'for those who are first will be last, and those who are last will be first'. Both sayings, in turn, point to the new reality that is to take place at the end of times, the great reversal eloquently depicted in the Beatitudes, when the kingdom of God will be established. When that eternal banquet occurs, you will not be asked to move to another place temporarily. No, you will be asked to stay there forever! And your decisions and actions throughout life will help determine which table you sit at.

In the final part of the gospel, Jesus continues the theme of the banquet, turning now from the guests to the hosts and offering once again some counsel. This time, however, his advice does not seem so practical. He suggests that when offering hospitality and issuing invitations to others, we should not invite our friends and relations because they might be able to repay us and invite us back. Instead, he says, 'when you hold a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind', because they cannot repay you! This might not seem practical or even make sense to us, but it is the true sign of hospitality—to welcome those who seemingly have nothing to offer. Though in reality they do!

In our work with asylum seekers and refugees through the Jesuit Refugee Service, we are called everyday to welcome and offer hospitality to people whom others might see as having nothing to offer! Perhaps such a view comes from ignorance or perhaps from fear of the other—of the one who is not like us, who does things differently, or who prays in ways foreign to us. Unfortunately, such fear or ignorance can mean that we turn a blind eye to the needs of some of the most vulnerable people in the world, and that we close our hearts and our minds to the gifts they are offering us, sometimes simply by their presence in our midst. I am thinking for example of a lovely woman from East Africa, Therese, who came to Australia almost two years ago as an asylum seeker. She was granted asylum and permanent residency soon after that.

Therese is a truly remarkable human being. She suffered much persecution in her country and was separated from her children for several years before she found them again in France, thanks to a series of almost miraculous events. I was with her when the first phone call from her sons came through. How do you describe the emotions in someone who has just discovered that hers sons are still alive and well? She recently visited them and saw them for the first time in four years. Therese is a devout Catholic and her faith has never wavered, even in the face of so many challenges and difficulties. She believes that God has and will always care for her and freely shares her love for God with others. She is a grace-filled person, radiant, gracious, serene and compassionate, who touches people's lives as soon as they meet her, young and old alike! Her story is powerful and inspiring, but it is the way in which she delivers it that makes it even more so—she shares it without resentment or blame for those who caused her so much pain. People cannot but be moved by her resilience and strength in overcoming great disadvantage. Therese embodies hope—a quality and a gift so needed in our world today.

One of our former international directors once wrote: Hostility comes from ignorance, hospitality from openness. Hostility towards strangers is born in a heart with barriers, hardened and incapable of seeing richness in diversity. The shift from hostility to hospitality happens when one experiences welcome, this gift of opening oneself to the reality of an individual or a family of refugees".

On this Migrant and Refugee Sunday we might reflect on the barriers that sometimes prevent us from opening our hearts to those who come to our shores in need of our protection and care. They may appear to have nothing to offer, but being hospitable to them can change our lives and lead us to the welcome that truly matters: "the welcome into the hospitality of God that lasts forever".

thoughts for reflec

Educators and students alike will gain insights into the role of the Church on the issue of Pastoral Care to Migrants and Refugees with particular emphasis on children and families

The following quotation from a wide range of Church Documents could be used in animating group discussion.

The Church's teaching on Migration, Family and Children

If the act of emigrating allows its more or less willing protagonist to obtain for himself at least the means of subsistence, he nevertheless has to pay a very high price for it in human terms. The discomforts and problems of the enforced move cannot be passed over in silence: some are personal and some are inherent in the life of a family, affected fatally by a sense of precariousness and by bruising and negative chance events, especially with regard to bringing up and educating the children.

Nor should one forget that the variety of legal situations often imposed on foreign immigrants creates disparities not only between them and the local population, but also between themselves. The features of the framework created by immigration, therefore, which are already multiple as to their causes, become yet more complex: migrants with their family and migrants separated from their family, temporary - for a greater or lesser time - migrants and definitive migrants, young people seeking their first job and young people looking for cultural or professional advancement, workers given over in large part to menial tasks abandoned by the locals, and professional men or employees of the multinational corporations, children born in their own land and subsequently emigrated, children born abroad and resident there without their families having clear ideas about and opportunities for deciding on the future, women and old people who are undergoing on their own or with their relatives the experience of migration, etc. We might add that inhuman situations have not altogether disappeared. Serious discrimination, even in the field of the human person's elementary rights, persists, and some progress achieved at a legal level has not yet put an end to uncertainties lower down. Nor can one ignore the phenomenon of the so-called 'clandestine' or 'illegal' workers, who are noticeably on the increase, and who are deprived of any kind of guarantee.

PCPCMI, Circular Letter to Episcopal Conferences Church and Human Mobility, 1978,2

Such a state of affairs can all too easily have disastrous moral effects which lead to the disintegration of family unity. There is, furthermore, the problem of children. Their integral education takes place within the family. It is only within the family that reciprocal exchange, open-mindedness, communion of sentiments, consultation and collaboration between spouses may, as regards so delicate a field as the education of children, be expressed in a spontaneous and natural fashion (cf. Gaudium et Spes, 1965, 51).

Now this primary mission is made extremely difficult if one or both parents are forced to emigrate and leave their children behind them at home, entrusted to the care of relations or social institutions. Emigration, in such cases, has profoundly negative repercussions which induce a genuine trauma both in parents and children.

The child's physical, social, emotional and psychological potential, demands the support of the environment which may facilitate and accompany its development; and such an environment is essentially constituted by the presence of parents and family life with them. Parents, in turn, if forcibly deprived of the presence of their children and family life with them, are stripped of that interaction and communion which enables and enhances their mission, and feel that the sentimental and moral charge that sustained their commitment to married life is in the process of being extinguished. In parents, the bond of affections and interests is in fact developed and matured in its manifestations if they are committed to the challenge of the education of their children. The very sacrifices made to gain economic and financial security, especially with a view to ensuring their children of a better future, may as a result lose much of their sense in their eyes.

Yet even the family which succeeds in emigrating without divisions between parents and children is not exempt from serious problems.

Nor can we ignore the fact that the isolation of the emigrant family is not infrequently exacerbated by prejudice and discrimination. All these factors give rise, sometimes insensibly, to restraints in relations between husband and wife, between parents and children, with the imminent threat of the breakdown in communication.

The family unit thus finds itself threatened by disintegration. On the one hand, the parents are, in spite of everything, prepared to endure toil, sacrifice, humiliation and psychological and emotional deprivation in order to, provide their children with and education and a future. On the other hand, however, the children themselves, in going to school, learning the local language and assimilating a different culture, are all too easily led to depreciate the generosity and self-sacrifice

of their parents, whose values and principles they reject. The possibility of a happy and serene family life is thus transformed into the bitterest disillusion. Significantly, a reflection of this state of affairs can also be found in the message issued by the Bishops of Europe at Subiaco (L' Osservatore Romano, 29-30 September 1980).

Card. Agostino Casaroli, Letter to Card Sebastiano Baggio, President PCPCMIP, 1980

In the context of emigration, bringing up children also remains a point of fundamental importance for a healthy approach to family life. In the light of the Church's teaching, pastoral care will help migrants not to get involved in work activities detrimental to those values on which the true peace and happiness of the family and its spiritual progress depend.

John Paul II, World Migrant and Refugee Day, 1993

When you are entrusted with the task of looking after children in the families for whom you work, without forcing and in complete harmony of intention with the parents, make the most of the great opportunity that is given you to help the religious formation of these children. The common priesthood, rooted in baptism, is expressed in you in the typical endowments of femininity, such as the capacity to serve life with a commitment which is deep, unconditional, and above all, inspired by love.

John Paul II, World Migrant and Refugee Day, 1996

Tourism also warrants special attention. Though a legitimate industry with its own cultural and educational values, tourism has in some cases a devastating influence upon the moral and physical landscape of many Asian countries, manifested in the degradation of young women and even children through prostitution.13 The pastoral care of migrants, as well as that of tourists, is difficult and complex, especially in Asia where basic structures for this may not exist. Pastoral planning at all levels needs to take these realities into account. In this context we should not forget the migrants from Catholic Eastern Churches who need pastoral care according to their own ecclesiastical traditions.

Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia in Asia, 1999, 14

We called for the nation's response to asylum seekers to be just, compassionate and consistent with Australia's obligations under International Law. We pleaded the cause of refugees and asylum seekers again (as we had done in 2002) because the Gospel compels us to do so. We remained hopeful that hearts and minds would change so that treatment of refugees and asylum seekers in Australia might be more humane, more respectful of human dignity. Finally we called for alternatives to mandatory detention for unaccompanied minors and for children who accompany their parents. Such alternatives must respect the importance of family unity and family reunion.

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Message Migrant and Refugee Sunday 2004

Inspired by this positive view of human life, the Holy See applauds the World Summit for Children as an important expression and consolidation of the increased awareness which has been shown by public opinion and States regarding the need to do much more to safeguard the well-being of the world's children, to enunciate the rights of the child and to protect those rights through cultural and legislative actions imbued with respect for human life as a value in itself, independently of sex, ethnic origin, social or cultural status, or political or religious conviction.

The children of the world cry out for greater respect for their inalienable individual dignity and for their right to life from the first moment of conception, even in the face of difficult circumstances or personal handicap. Every individual, no matter how small or how seemingly unimportant in utilitarian terms, bears the imprint of the Creator's image and likeness (Cfr. Gen 1,26). Policies and actions which do not recognize that unique condition of innate dignity cannot lead to a more just and humane world, for they go against the very values which determine objective moral categories and which form the basis of rational moral judgments and right actions.

During the International Year of the Child in 1979 I had the opportunity of addressing the UN General Assembly. I repeat today, with increased emphasis, the conviction and hope I manifested at that time "No country on earth, no political system can think of its own future otherwise than through the image of these new generations that will receive from their parents the manifold heritage of values, duties and aspirations of the nation to which they belong and of the whole human family. Concern for the child, even before birth, from the first moment of conception and then throughout the years of infancy and youth, is the primary and fundamental test of the relationship of one human being to another. And so, what better wish can I express for every nation and for the whole of mankind, and for all the children of the world than a better future in which respect for human rights will become a complete reality" (Ioannis Pauli PP. II Allocutio ad Nationum Unitarum Legatos, 21, die 2 oct.1979: Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, II, 2 (1979) 538).

John Paul II To His Excellency Javier Pérez de Cuellar Secretary General of the United Nations Organization on the occasion of the World Summit for Children September 22, 1990.

suggested petitions

These petitions may be translated in various languages depending on ethnic composition of the parish or the school.

The Lord blesses us with his Holy Spirit so that we may reach out to the beauty of diversity and thus build His Kingdom. You invite us to the Table of Communion with you and with one another and invite us to throw down the barriers in our hearts and mind.

Lord Jesus, we pray For Pope Benedict, our Bishop and all those who minister in the Church, that they me be instruments of communion and help all migrants and refugees from the many parts of the world to feel at home in our community. Let us pray to the Lord: ***Lord, hear our prayers****.*

For the Church, sacrament of communion, may she be a welcoming home where people from many nations and languages gather together and where diversity is contemplated in the unity of the Holy Trinity. Let us pray to the Lord: ***Lord, hear our prayers****.*

Lord Jesus, you invite us to be at the table of your Eucharist, give the grace to be free from the fear of the diverse, to be humble in sharing our goods and to be compassionate with all. Let us pray to the Lord: ***Lord, hear our prayers****.*

Lord Jesus you call all people to your table to learn the ways of peace and justice, where no one comes first, but all are brothers and sisters. Let us pray to the Lord: ***Lord, hear our prayers****.*

Lord Jesus we pray that our parishes be able to value the gift of children and youth who come from different countries and culture, be able to welcome them and enable them to be fully part of our Christian communities. Let us pray to Lord: ***Lord, hear our prayers****.*

Lord Jesus we pray that our legislators and political leaders may be able to enhance laws that respect solidarity, compassion and welcome. ***Lord, hear our prayers****.*

Lord Jesus you prepared a banquet for us, we pray that we may be able to share our abundance with those in need. ***Lord, hear our prayers****.*

Lord Jesus, you came into this world as a migrant and like many children there was no room for your family. Make us aware of the pain and sufferings of the minor migrants and refugees that are in our Country. ***Lord, hear our prayers****.*

Lord Jesus, as a child, your family became refugees fleeing from Herod and so you lived in Egypt as a refugee. Grant that our homes, our parishes and our communities may become places of encounter and communion; a family for those who do not have a family near to care for them. ***Lord, hear our prayers.***

Dear Jesus, you are the refuge of people on the move. We ask you to grant immigrants, refugees, and all migrants peace, protection and the welcome of a community. Help us to recognize that whenever we welcome the stranger in your name, we welcome you. Make us one at the table of your home. We make our prayers through Christ our Lord.

Amen

Sample of responses in different languages

Before Mass begins, or preparing a prayer services, particularly in schools or in other groups, the Priest, the Liturgical Leader or the Teacher could find some time in practicing the pronunciation of the different responses with the assembly or the group or the school children. Other languages may be added according to ethnic presence in a parish, a school or a group.

Latin:	Exaudi nos, Domine
English:	Hear us, o Lord
Italian:	Ascoltaci, o Signore
Maltese:	Ismana nitolbuk, Mulej
Spanish:	O Señor, escucha nuestra oración
Portuguese:	O Senhor, escuta nossa oração
Indonesian:	Tuhan dengar doa kami
Pilipino (Tagalog):	Panginoon, dinggin mo kami
Vietnamese:	Xin Chua lang nghe loi cau nguyen cua chung con
Samoan:	Le Alli e faafofoga mai
Swaili:	Twa Kuomba utusikie
Malayalam (Syro-Malabaric):	സമൂ. കർത്താവേ, നിന്നോടു ഞങ്ങൾ പ്രാർത്ഥിക്കുന്നു.

letter of the his holiness john paul II

TO THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATION ON THE OCCASION OF THE WORLD SUMMIT FOR CHILDREN

To His Excellency Javier Pérez de Cuellar, Secretary General of the United Nations Organization on the occasion of the World Summit for Children.

"Your children will be like olive shoots around your table" (Ps. 128(127), 3).

These simple words of the Psalmist speak of children as a great blessing from God and a source of intense joy for the family.

Inspired by this positive view of human life, the Holy See applauds the World Summit for Children as an important expression and consolidation of the increased awareness which has been shown by public opinion and States regarding the need to do much more to safeguard the well-being of the world's children, to enunciate the rights of the child and to protect those rights through cultural and legislative actions imbued with respect for human life as a value in itself, independently of sex, ethnic origin, social or cultural status, or political or religious conviction. Not being able personally to take part in the Summit, I extend warmest greetings to you, Mr Secretary General, and to the distinguished Heads of State and of Government present. Confident that the achievements of the human race are a sign of God's greatness and the fulfilment of his mysterious design, I ardently invoke divine light and wisdom upon your deliberations.

I am pleased to express the appreciation of the Catholic Church for all that has been and is being done under the auspices of the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies to guarantee the survival, health, protection and integral development of children, the most defenceless of our brothers and sisters, the most innocent and deserving sons and daughters of our common Father in heaven. The Holy See's prompt accession to the Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on November 20, 1989 accords with the Catholic Church's bi-millenary tradition of service to those in material or spiritual need, especially the weaker members of the human family, among whom children have always received special attention. In the Child of Bethlehem, Christians contemplate the uniqueness, the dignity and the need for love of every child. In the example and teaching of her Founder, the Church perceives a mandate to devote special care to the needs of children (Cfr. Marc. 10,14); indeed, in the Christian view, our treatment of children becomes a measure of our fidelity to the Lord himself (Cfr. Matth. 18,5).

The Church has a vivid perception of the immense burden of suffering and injustice borne by the children of the world. In my own ministry and pastoral journeys, I am a witness of the heartbreaking plight of millions of children in every continent. They are most vulnerable, because they are least able to make their voice heard. My contribution to this Summit, Mr Secretary General, is meant to reinforce before this powerful Assembly the often wordless but no less legitimate and insistent appeal which the children of the world address to those who have the means and the responsibility to make better provision for them.

The children of the world cry out for love. In this case love stands for the real concern of one human being for another, for the good that each owes to the other in the bond of our common humanity. A child cannot survive physically, psychologically and spiritually without the solidarity which makes us all responsible for all, a responsibility which assumes particular intensity in the self-giving love of parents for their offspring.

The Holy See attributes particular significance to the fact that the Convention recognizes the irreplaceable role of the family in fostering the growth and well-being of its members. The family is the first and vital cell of society because of its service to life and because it is the first school of the social virtues that are the animating principle of the existence and development of society itself. The well-being of the world's children therefore depends greatly on the measures taken by States to support and help families to fulfil their natural life-giving and formative functions.

The children of the world cry out for greater respect for their inalienable individual dignity and for their right to life from the first moment of conception, even in the face of difficult circumstances or personal handicap. Every individual, no matter how small or how seemingly unimportant in utilitarian terms, bears the imprint of the Creator's image and likeness (Cfr. Gen 1,26). Policies and actions which do not recognize that unique condition of innate dignity cannot lead to a more just and humane world, for they go against the very values which determine objective moral categories and which form the basis of rational moral judgments and right actions.

The International Convention on the Rights of the Child constitutes a statement of priorities and obligations which can serve as a reference point and stimulus for action on behalf of children everywhere. The Holy See gladly acceded to and endorses the Convention on the understanding that goals, programmes and actions stemming from it will respect the moral and religious convictions of those to whom they are directed, in particular the moral convictions of parents regarding the transmission of life, with no urging to resort to means which are morally unacceptable, as well as their freedom in relation to the religious life and education of their children. Children who are to learn to be supportive of their fellow man must learn the reality of mutually supportive relationships in the family itself, where there is profound respect for all human life, unborn as well as born, and where both mother and father jointly make responsible decisions regarding the exercise of their parenthood.

During the International Year of the Child in 1979 I had the opportunity of addressing the UN General Assembly. I repeat today, with increased emphasis, the conviction and hope I manifested at that time "No country on earth, no political system can think of its own future otherwise than through the image of these new generations that will receive from their parents the manifold heritage of values, duties and aspirations of the nation to which they belong and of the whole human family. Concern for the child, even before birth, from the first moment of conception and then throughout the years of infancy and youth, is the primary and fundamental test of the relationship of one human being to another. And so, what better wish can I express for every nation and for the whole of mankind, and for all the children of the world than a better future in which respect for human rights will become a complete reality" (Ioannis Pauli PP. II Allocutio ad Nationum Unitarum Legatos, 21, die 2 oct.1979: Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II, II, 2 (1979) 538).

May Almighty God lead this Summit to lay a solid juridical foundation for the achievement of such a reality!

From the Vatican, September 22, 1990.

IOANNES PAULUS PP. II

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