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AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC MIGRANT & REFUGEE OFFICE

News

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Migration and the New Evangelization

Dear
Brothers and Sisters,

Proclaiming Jesus Christ the one Saviour of the world "constitutes the essential mission of the Church. It is a task and mission which the vast and profound changes of present-day society make all the more urgent" (Evangelii Nuntiandi, 14). **Indeed, today we feel the urgent need to give a fresh impetus and new approaches to the work of evangelization in a world in which the breaking down of frontiers and the new processes of globalization are bringing individuals and peoples even closer.** This is both because of the development of the means of social communication and because of the frequency and ease with which individuals and groups can move about today.

In this new situation we must reawaken in each one of us the enthusiasm and courage that motivated the first Christian communities to be undaunted heralds of the Gospel's newness, making St Paul's words resonate in our hearts: "For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!" (1 Cor 9:16).

"Migration and the New Evangelization" is the theme I have chosen this year for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, and it arises from the aforesaid situation.

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE



The present time, in fact, calls upon the Church to embark on a new evangelization also in the vast and complex phenomenon of human mobility. This calls for an intensification of her missionary activity both in the regions where the Gospel is proclaimed for the first time and in countries with a Christian tradition.

Blessed John Paul II invited us to "nourish ourselves with the word in order to be 'servants of the word' in the work of evangelization ... [in] a situation which is becoming increasingly diversified and demanding, in the context of 'globalization' and of the consequent new and uncertain mingling of peoples and cultures" (Novo Millennio Ineunte, 40). Internal or international migration, in fact, as an



opening in search of better living conditions or to flee from the threat of persecution, war, violence, hunger or natural disasters, has led to an unprecedented mingling of individuals and peoples, with new problems not only from the human standpoint but also from ethical, religious and spiritual ones. The current and obvious consequences of secularization, the emergence of new sectarian movements, widespread insensitivity to the Christian faith and a marked tendency to fragmentation are obstacles to focusing on a unifying reference that would encourage the formation of "one family of brothers and sisters in societies that are becoming ever

more multiethnic and intercultural, where also people of various religions are urged to take part in dialogue, so that a serene and fruitful coexistence with respect for legitimate differences may be found", as I wrote in my Message last year for this World Day. Our time is marked by endeavours to efface God and the Church's teaching from the horizon of life, while doubt, scepticism and indifference are creeping in, seeking to eliminate all the social and symbolic visibility of the Christian faith.

In this context migrants who have known and welcomed Christ are not infrequently constrained to consider him no longer relevant to their lives, to lose the meaning of their faith, no longer to recognize themselves as members of the Church, and often lead a life no longer marked by Christ and his Gospel. Having grown up among peoples characterized by their Christian faith they often emigrate to countries in which Christians are a minority or where the ancient tradition of faith, no longer a personal conviction or a community religion, has been reduced to a cultural fact. Here the Church is faced with the challenge of helping migrants keep their faith firm even when they are deprived of the cultural support that existed in their country of origin, and of identifying new pastoral approaches, as well as methods and expressions, for an ever vital reception of the Word of God. In some cases this is an opportunity to proclaim that, in Jesus Christ, humanity has been enabled to participate in the mystery of God and in his life of love. Humanity is also opened to a horizon of hope and peace, also through respectful dialogue and a tangible testimony of solidarity. In other cases there is the possibility of reawakening the dormant Christian conscience through a renewed proclamation of the Good News and a more consistent Christian life to enable people to rediscover the beauty of the encounter with Christ who calls Christians to holiness wherever they may be, even in a foreign land.

The phenomenon of migration today is also a providential opportunity for the proclamation of the Gospel in the contemporary world. Men and women from various regions of the earth who have not yet encountered Jesus Christ or know him only partially, ask to be received in countries with an ancient Christian tradition. It is necessary to find adequate ways for them to meet and to become acquainted with Jesus Christ and to experience the invaluable gift of salvation which, for everyone, is a source of "life in abundance" (cf. Jn 10:10); migrants themselves have a special role in this regard because they in turn can become "heralds of God's word and witnesses to the Risen Jesus, the hope of the world" (Apostolic Exhortation *Verbum Domini*, 105).

Pastoral workers – priests, religious and lay people – play a crucial role in the demanding itinerary of the new evangelization in the context of migration. They work increasingly in a pluralist context: in communion with their Ordinaries, drawing on the Church's Magisterium. I invite them to seek ways of fraternal sharing and respectful proclamation, overcoming opposition and nationalism. For their part, the Churches of origin, of transit and those that welcome the migration flows should find ways to increase their cooperation for the benefit both of those who depart and those who arrive, and, in any case, of those who, on their journey, stand in need of encountering the merciful face of Christ in the welcome given to one's neighbour. To achieve a fruitful pastoral service of communion, it may be useful to update the traditional structures of care for migrants and refugees, by setting beside them models that respond better to the new situations in which different peoples and cultures interact with one another.

Asylum seekers, who fled from persecution, violence and situations that put their life at risk, stand in need of our understanding and welcome, of respect for their human dignity and rights, as well as awareness of their duties. Their suffering pleads with individual states and the international community to adopt attitudes of reciprocal acceptance, overcoming fears and avoiding forms of discrimination, and to make provisions for concrete solidarity also through appropriate structures for hospitality and resettlement programmes. All this entails mutual help between the suffering regions and those which, already for years, have accepted a large number of fleeing people, as well as a greater sharing of responsibilities among States.

The press and the other media have an important role in making known, correctly, objectively and honestly, the situation of those who have been forced to leave their homeland and their loved ones and want to start building a new life.

Christian communities are to pay special attention to migrant workers and their families by accompanying them with prayer, solidarity and Christian charity, by enhancing what is reciprocally enriching, as well as by fostering new political, economic and social planning that promotes respect for the dignity of every human person, the safeguarding of the family, access to dignified housing, to work and to welfare.

Priests, men and women religious, lay people, and most of all young men and women are to be sensitive in offering support to their many sisters and brothers who, having fled from violence, have to face new lifestyles and the difficulty of integration. The proclamation of salvation in Jesus Christ will be a source of relief, hope and "full joy" (cf. Jn 15:11).



Lastly, I would like to mention the situation of numerous international students who are facing problems of integration, bureaucratic difficulties, hardship in the search for housing and welcoming structures. Christian communities are to be especially sensitive to the many young men and women who, precisely because of their youth, need reference points in addition to cultural growth, and have in their hearts a profound thirst for truth and the desire to encounter God. Universities of Christian inspiration are to be, in a special way, places of witness and of the spread of the new evangelization, seriously committed to contributing to social, cultural and human progress in the academic milieu. They are also to promote intercultural dialogue and enhance the contribution that international students can give. If these students meet authentic Gospel witnesses and examples of Christian life, it will encourage them to become agents of the new evangelization.

Dear friends, let us invoke the intercession of Mary, "Our Lady of the Way", so that the joyful proclamation of salvation in Jesus Christ may bring hope to the hearts of those who are on the move on the roads of the world. To one and all I assure my prayers and impart my Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 21 September 2011

BENEDICTUS PP. XVI



1st National Meeting of Spanish Speaking Chaplaincies in Australia

FINAL DECLARATION DRAFT

From the 22nd to the 24th of September 2011, the First National Meeting of the Spanish Speaking Chaplaincies was convoked by the *Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office (ACMRO)* from the Australian Bishops Conference and hosted by the Spanish Speaking Community of Acacia Ridge in Brisbane.

First of all, we acknowledge the ministry to Spanish Speaking communities all over Australia for many years by pastoral workers and religious congregations not present at this first National meeting. We acknowledge their valuable work and look forward to their participation in future gatherings.

For ten years the Scalabrinians working with the Spanish Speaking Communities gathered yearly to share ideas and to support their ministry at the national level. During the last 5 years lay people supporting the Scalabrinians missionaries attended the meetings, enriching the reflection with their own experiences and pastoral work. It has become evident that in the field of migration there are new issues arising, prompting us to respond pastorally, involving all Spanish Speaking communities and their pastoral workers. Therefore, aiming to have a national pastoral plan, under the umbrella of the ACMRO this endeavour has been now taken, fostering communion and diversity, by all Spanish Speaking Communities in Australia.

The following Chaplaincies, communities and pastoral workers were represented: Brisbane (**Petrie, Acacia Ridge and Gold Coast zone**), Melbourne (**Hoppers Crossing, Doveton, Broadmeadows, Sunshine, Ascot Vale, and North Fitzroy**), Sydney (**Mascot, Plumpton (absent), North Ryde, Hurstville and Ashcroft**) and Adelaide; the community of Townsville-QLD, under the leadership of David Renderos and from Sydney Sr. Ines Radwell RSCJ. We also had the attendance of the Director of the ACMRO Fr. Maurizio Pettina and Father Savino Bernardi, Provincial superior of the Scalabrinian Fathers.

We thank the communities of the Brisbane chaplaincy for their hospitality and service. We praise God and Our Lady of Guadalupe for their blessings and graces they poured upon us during the meeting.



At the end of the meeting this was the proposed objective:

To work towards a National Pastoral Vision that is inclusive of all migrants from the Spanish speaking communities working together with the local church, inspired by documents: Ecclesia in Oceania and "Documento de Aparecida" inviting us: to live and to promote a pastoral model based on partnership, a model of church that would be Communitarian, evangelizer and missionary, incarnated in the Spanish speaking communities' in Australia; opened to diversity of cultures, that would promote and be an example of justice; that would develop leadership through an integral education that would ferment the kingdom of God in the Australian society.

Resolutions:

"We also agreed by general consensus to carry out the following"



1. Unity in Diversity: We are committed to promoting a new way of living based on Unity in diversity where Jesus Christ is the Centre of our existence. We are also committed to work towards the unification of the different ethnic communities and religious groups.

2. International Students: we recognise the needs that this new emerging group requires. As an immediate response we have agreed that each Spanish speaking chaplaincy or community will develop a pastoral plan that would address the needs arising in its own community. Part of this is to identify existing services for the International Students and creating links with local church and communities

3. Integration: We recognise the importance of having an active presence in the local church so we agreed to begin with tangible initiatives of integration: Informing local parishes (Diocese Level) of our national work and that we are not subdivisions of the Catholic Church. We have also made the commitment to participate in the local church by forming links, being present and formalising representation where possible. We recognise that are many realities at local level and we would like to work in conjunction with the local church, understanding the initial steps will be small ones.

4. Formation: We identified that there is clear need to form lay people within the following two areas:

Evangelization - Catechesis	Academic (Diploma)
(Faith)	(Reasoning)

This proposal will also need to respond to the needs of each community and also to create a bank of human resources from where we can source and exchange for the formation and catechesis of lay people within our communities.

5. Newsletter: The continuation of a national Newsletter as a tool to transmit information among the communities relying on the contributions from the communities and pastoral workers.

We recognise and express our gratitude to the Episcopal Conference of Australia for sponsoring this first meeting and for the presence of the presence of Fr. Maurizio Pettena, Director of AMCRO. We affirm our desire to communicate and to keep communion with the local church by informing our activities to the Episcopal Conference of Australia.

We have agreed that the 2nd National Conference will take place next year in Adelaide from 20 to 22 of September 2012.

Thank you to the Spanish Speaking Community for contributing this article and photos.



Presentation of Pope's Message

On October 25, the Pontifical Council for Migrants and Itinerant People launched the 2012 message of the Holy Father for World Day of Migrants and Refugees. The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference had decreed that this be celebrated in Australia during the course of an entire week culminating with the actual celebration on the last Sunday of August. In 2012 this will be on August 26.

For 2012, the Holy Father has chosen the theme of "Migration and the New Evangelization", "The present time, in fact, calls upon the Church to embark on a new evangelization also in the vast and complex phenomenon of human mobility. This calls for an intensification of her missionary activity both in the regions where the Gospel is proclaimed for the first time and in countries with a Christian tradition" Evangelizing is the heart of the Mission of Jesus Christ, "I must preach the Kingdom of God ... for this I was sent" (Lc 4,43).

St. Paul writes in his first letter to the Corinthians "To proclaim the Gospel is not for me a boast; rather it is a necessity that compels me: woe to me if I do not proclaim Gospel!" (1 9,16).

Pope Benedict, recalling the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*, reaffirms that evangelize, that is to proclaim Jesus Christ the only Saviour of the world and his Gospel, "constitutes the essential mission of the Church" (No. 14).

In launching the 2012 Message, Archbishop Vegliò, President of the Pontifical Council for Migrants and Itinerant People remarked that today we find ourselves in front of a social and religious reality characterized by an impressive flow of movements, so that the mobility of individuals and of peoples, mainly due to internal and international migrations, "as an outlet for the search of better living conditions or to escape from the threat of persecution, wars, violence, hunger and natural disasters," produce "a diverse mixture of peoples and cultures", with its own identity and faces (cf. Message 2012, § 3). As a result, the whole world has become a land for the new evangelization, almost a new land and new culture where to proclaim the Gospel afresh. In fact, people who don't know Jesus Christ are in Countries of ancient Christian tradition, while many Christians emigrated towards regions that, in the past, were called places of "mission".

Blessed John Paul II in his Encyclical "Redemptoris Missio" writes of the different activities that one can perform within the unique mission of the Church because of diverse circumstances in which evangelization takes place (RMi, 33). The Message underlines that migration creates opportunity for a renewed meeting amongst people from different part of the world. The Church must vigil so these movements of people "be lawfully regulated, freeing them from the scourge of poverty, exploitation, the trafficking of organs and of people". Attention must be exercised "to protect the dignity of every human person and to promote the authentic progress" so that "contemporary migration can become a blessing for the dialogue between peoples, the coexistence in justice and peace, the proclamation of the Gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ".

The final section of the Papal Message is dedicated to young people who, for reasons of study and professional training, go to a foreign country. The Holy Father acknowledges that these international students "face problems, bureaucratic difficulties, hardships in finding accommodation and reception facilities".



Fr Gabriele Bentoglio, Under-secretary of the Pontifical Council affirmed that at the end of the first decade of this century, the number of students abroad has surpassed the three million and is expected to reach 7 million by 2025.

The main countries that receive them are United States of America, United Kingdom, Germany and France. During the Decade just ended, however, the most drastic increases in the percentages were in New Zealand and in Korea, followed by Australia, Canada and Japan. Fr Bentoglio also noted that over 50% of the total flows of international students registered in 2008 came from 20 Countries including, at the top, China, Poland, India and Mexico. Compared to previous years, however, the major increases are attributable to Colombia, China, Romania and Morocco. Decreased, however, are students coming from the Philippines and the Russian Federation.

The Holy Father calls on those who have academic and pastoral responsibilities to encourage cooperation between the students of various cultures, also in view of the explicit proclamation of the Gospel to young people. For this reason, the Holy Father hopes that young people and university students be able to encounter an "authentic witnesses of the Gospel, and an example of Christian" so that they themselves may be inspired and motivated to "become actors of the new evangelization".

Fr. Maurizio Pettenà CS

Nobody chooses to be an asylum seeker

On 11 October 2011, newly appointed Bishop Vincent Long van Nguyen, delivered the *Rerum Novarum* Oration on the theme;

Asylum Seekers. Is there a *just* solution.

Bishop Vincent's address detailed his life journey from an internally displaced person in his native Vietnam, his life as an asylum seeker (a so-called "boat person") and refugee, his resettlement in Australia, calling to the priesthood and appointment as Auxiliary Bishop of Melbourne. Bishop Vincent's address has been recorded and is now available at:

<http://www.cam.org.au/melbourne-news/bishop-vincent-long-gives-rerum-novarum-oration-2011-video.html>

In the current social debate, Bishop Vincent's address provides what has been sadly lacking - compassion and respect based upon Catholic Social Teaching - that is, upholding the God-given Dignity of each person, and striving for the Common Good.

In responding to Bishop Vincent's address, former Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Malcolm Fraser, deplored what he called "Wretched" legislation that has been introduced into the Commonwealth Parliament. Mr Fraser's address is also available and both addresses make a wonderful resource in the discussion on Australia's treatment of those seeking asylum.

I hope you find time to view both presentations, and ask that your forward the link to others who may not have been able to be personally in attendance on the night, encouraging them to also view the addresses, by these two honourable and compassionate people.

Mark Clarke

Executive Officer

Office for Justice and Peace

Why Consular Service Matters? An Australian Perspective

by Juan Enriquez Dayang, Jr.
The Australian National University

Introduction

When Australia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Kevin Rudd appears on You Tube to advise Australians who are planning on attending the Rugby World Cup 2011 in New Zealand to visit the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's (DFAT) website for travel tips, travel bulletin and register their travel for any emergency, Rudd is primarily giving top priority to the safety and well-being of Australians as part of DFAT's consular function.

Why does consular service matters to governments and citizens?

The primary function of consuls is to promote state interest, in particular trade and commercial interest and protect and assist nationals apart from issuing travel documents such as passports and visas and legalization of papers. Consular representation predates the modern state system and certainly the Vienna Convention of Consular Relations of 1963 which codifies the role and functions of consulates and its representatives.

Consular assistance is a significant undertaking of foreign ministries. As people continue to move outside of their countries of origin in a more globalized world, public demand for consular service grows. As more complex issues arise due to travel and migration, the more complex and responsive consular services are required.

Many are familiar with high-profile cases concerning citizens in trouble overseas such as the victims of the 9/11 World Trade Center bombings in New York City and the Bali bombings in the tourist district of Kuta that killed 202 people including 88 Australians and 38 Indonesians. In 2011, we have seen governments providing assistance to their citizens who are caught in harm's way either in natural calamities such as the tsunami in Japan or in conflict zones during the "Arab Spring." For example, Australia, Canada, Greece, the Philippines, Turkey and the U.S., were some of the countries who evacuated their citizens who were trapped in strife-torn Egypt during the mass protest that toppled the Mubarak regime. It followed large scale repatriations conducted by nations such as Australia and the Philippines when thousands of Lebanese-Australians and Filipino migrant workers fled Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 2006. These are often very severe cases and highly charged. Yet, the immensity of consular work is rarely recognized widely and few people know how broad and complex consular activities are. For emigrant countries like India, Mexico and the Philippines, consular protection of migrants and engagement with diaspora communities through consular networks matter a lot. But even for immigrant countries like Australia, consular service is a core task of DFAT.

How have countries as exemplified by the Australian experience, a nation of travelers, made consular affairs a core task of the foreign ministry?

As a nation of travelers, current statistics estimate that more than 3.5 million Australians – which account for almost 20 per cent of the population – travel abroad each year. Although Australians who travel, work, and study abroad generally do not need consular assistance from the Embassies and consulates, they still face risks and occasional difficulties when traveling overseas. In these situations, Australia's DFAT attends to its citizens in trouble to assuage the public pressure for government's quick response and immediate assistance to citizens in distress.

Consular officers of Australia perform many of the same functions as other diplomatic personnel such as issuance of passports, legalization or notarization of documents, etc. However, an important role of consular affairs is to assist Australian in emergency situations and provide critical legal assistance and jail visitation for those charged with criminal offense. For example, the case of the 14-year old boy, the youngest Australian to be arrested in Indonesia, for drug possession in Bali in October 2011 prompted Foreign Affairs Minister Kevin Rudd to declare that negotiating the release of the Australian schoolboy on possible charges is a 'number one' priority. Rudd said that:

"I have just spoken with our ambassador in Jakarta [Greg Moriarty] and I have indicated to him that his number one priority in the immediate period ahead is how we support this young boy and his family and do everything we can to obtain his early return to Australia."

Consular service is for everyone. Even arrested Wiki leaks founder Julian Assange was promised consular assistance in 2010 including consular visits and any other types of consular help concerning his well being and legal rights by Foreign Minister Rudd who said that:

"What we do with Australians in strife anywhere in the world is that we take the view that our responsibility is to ensure the consular rights and legal rights of all Australians abroad are protected. And that includes Mr. Assange."

As a matter of prevention, DFAT issues travel advisories to Australians similar to advisories issued by US State Department. According to William Maley of the Asia-Pacific College of Diplomacy of the Australian National University, travel advisory "points to a new form of consular activity that was not specifically contemplated by the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations of 1963".



Photo: DFAT Canberra

Source: <http://www.radioaustralianews.net.au/stories/201109/3328680.htm?desktop>

Some of the programs of DFAT include the 'Smart Traveller', the 24-hour consular hotline, and the crisis response team. With 'Smart Traveller' Australians could register their details online for easy tracking in case of a crisis situation and be updated through Facebook and Twitter. The 'Smart Traveller' has helped in "chasing" or locating Australians abroad, especially those who are caught in natural disasters such as the tsunamis in Thailand, earthquake in New Zealand and Japan as well as in areas of conflict and attacks such as the Bali Bombing in Indonesia, and in the recent political crisis in Egypt.

Australia's DFAT takes the lead role in crisis situations overseas. It has a well-organized and well-funded corps of able DFAT personnel, formed in cadres of about 10 officers and staff. These élite cadres are prepared to operate at a moment's notice. It shows the high priority given by the DFAT in emergency assistance to its citizens in distress. The policy is backed up by financial resources worth US\$12M over a ten-year period which is used for technology, staffing requirements, and ways to improve the system.



The consular emergency unit of Australia's foreign affairs ministry is equipped with a conference room with multiple video screens and computers hooked to the internet and cable TV to monitor a particular crisis situation. The unit holds inter-agency meetings at DFAT and tele-conferences with Ambassadors stationed in crisis zones for updates and instructions. Even without a crisis, two people monitor emergency cases. For example, if they are alerted of a plane crash overseas, they immediately inform the relevant Embassy or Consulate for verification of any Australian casualty and briefs the press office with prepared talking points.

Conclusion

There is a positive correlation between travel and migration and consular service. The increase of people moving from one country to another facilitates the interconnectedness of the world economy. This translates to higher demand for consular service. As there are people who may be in vulnerable situations overseas either due to man-made or natural disasters, citizens require consular protection to defend their lives from harm or their rights from abuse.



The Australian case provides an example of how consular affairs matters to foreign ministries and citizens. The readiness of DFAT to act and manage crisis through consular assistance run a gamut of intervention from “chasing” Australian tourists missing in a beach resort in Southeast Asia or providing legal advice to citizens who have encounters with the law.

Governments are giving more priority to consular services as public demand increases for consular assistance. The reports of media on citizens' facing troubles overseas fan increase demand for government response and responsibility to assist nationals overseas. As such,

Embassy and consular networks are the primary interlocutors of the state with its citizen's overseas. As there will be more people who will be working overseas or decide to permanently migrate, engagement with their communities to link them with their hometowns will be another feature of consular work. Governments will also grapple with the problem of irregular migration and consular networks provide the necessary assistance in protecting the rights of vulnerable migrants and either by facilitating their legalization process, rescuing them from harm, or assist them in their smooth repatriation in partnership among countries of origin, transit, and destination.

Consular affairs as a dimension of diplomacy has become a core task of foreign ministries. Saving peoples lives and defending the rights of citizens are high in the agenda of governments. There are plenty of opportunities for scholarship in the field of consular diplomacy and a rewarding career awaits Foreign Service officers who desire to serve their country and people. Indeed, consular service matters not only to governments but to citizens. This is the human dimension of diplomacy.



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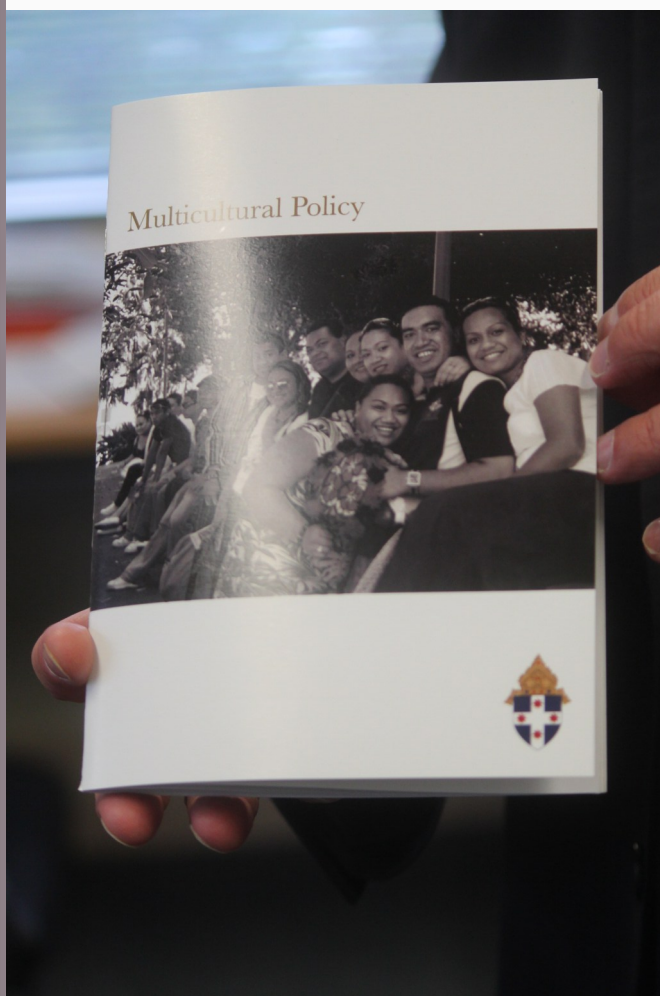


Sydney Multicultural Pastoral Policy

On October 5, His Eminence, Card George Pell launched the Multicultural Pastoral Policy of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney. In his opening remarks, Card Pell recalled his ongoing pastoral experience with migrants arriving in Australia from his earlier days as a parish priest all through his life present life as an Archbishop.

Fr. Domenic Ceresoli CS, Episcopal Vicar for Migrants and Refugees in the Archdiocese of Sydney spoke of the great contribution that the migrant community makes to the life of the society and of the Church not only in Sydney, but throughout Australia.. **This multicultural policy recognises the presence of migrants from many lands and cultures who have made a great contribution to Catholic life.** It also acknowledge the important ministry of migrant chaplains and their role into making migrants and refugees fully a part of the local church.

The Documents highlights the ecclesiological foundation of the multicultural policy, namely that though coming from various place and cultures with a diverse experience of faith and worship, **we are all but one in Christ Jesus:** we share one baptism, one faith, one community of faith and one mission. after drawing the picture of who a migrant is today, what his/her characteristics are; his/her dreams and hopes as well as his/her fears and anguish, the policy remarks on a number of groups that deserve a renewed pastoral attention. Families, international students, Asylum Seekers and Refugees among them.



Sourcing out of the long teaching tradition of the Catholic Church in matter of migration such as “The Love of Christ Towards Migrants and the Australian Graced by Migration, the Archdiocese of Sydney implements its pastoral care to migrants and refugees through a variety of pastoral models to better respond to needs of migrants: those who have established themselves in Australia long ago and those of recent arrivals. It suffices to mention the “Bakita Pastoral Centre” for the pastoral care of newly arrived Sudanese migrants.

The Document acknowledges also the great ministry of evangelization migrants do not only within their community, but indeed within the Church at large.

Bishop Julian Porteous and Bishop Peter Comensoli, Auxiliary Bishops of Sydney and Fr Maurizio Pettenà, National Director of the Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office intervened at the launching.

Fr. Maurizio Pettenà CS

The Australian Catholic Bishops welcome on-shore processing of asylum seekers

Media Release 14 October, 2011

The Catholic Church welcomes the decision taken yesterday by the Government to process the claims of vulnerable asylum seekers onshore.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister, decided to delay the Migration Bill accepting that onshore processing had to be adopted. This came after the High Court found that the Government did not have the power to swap asylum seekers with Malaysia due to inadequate protection safeguards.

“The Government knows all too well the views of the Catholic Church on this matter. The Catholic Church has always been advocating in favour of onshore processing”, said Fr Maurizio Pettena, Director of the Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office.

“Global contemporary migration which reveals the plight of asylum seekers is marked by injustices, abuses, exploitation, human trafficking and all sort of persecutions. This poses a very serious and urgent call to action on the part of the human community and more so on the part of those who have been elected to public offices to serve for the good of all”, he said.

The Catholic Church offers pastoral care to asylum seekers both during the time their visas are being processed and after and has always offered to work with the Government in the pursuit of more humane ways to respond to the cry of asylum seekers.

“More boats will likely come as this unfortunately is the reality of the world we live in – there is still much suffering in the world. However, this is not a call for alarm or community anxiety, on the contrary, Australia boasts over 200 Charities ready to support asylum seekers in the community. Helping others never leads to social unrest; rather, it builds goodwill, peace and international respect” said Fr Pettena.

The Catholic Church calls on all political parties to work towards implementing a fast and effective system of onshore processing which will give back to asylum seekers the human dignity they long for and will enable them to fully contribute to our Australian society.

“The Government has been visionary in hosting asylum seekers in the community, having recently moved a great number of Children out of detention. The catholic church strongly encourages the Government to continue in this endeavour” he said.

For media enquiries or to arrange an interview with Fr Maurizio Pettenà, please contact Beth Doherty on 0407 081 256 or Joe Moloney on 02 6201 9848.

MEDIA RELEASE 28 October 2011

ACMRO offers sympathy on death of Sri Lankan refugee; renews call for an end to mandatory detention.

Media Release,
28 October 2011

The Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office offer our condolence to the family of the Sri Lankan refugee who passed away on Wednesday, 26 October. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family and to the Sri Lankan community.

The Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office also wish to express our empathy to the many other refugees and asylum seekers still in detention waiting for their claims to be assessed and processed.

Director of the ACMRO, Fr Maurizio Pettená lamented “this is another very sad story of immigration detention.”

“Australia still has over 4400 asylum seekers in immigration detention facilities. Over 2000 of these have been deprived of their liberty for more than 12 months, despite the fact they have committed no crime. This injustice must end” said Fr Pettená.

“The length of time spent in detention and the frustration of not been able to challenge their detention or seek explanation of why their detention is being prolonged, understandably may result in tragedies such as the taking of one’s own life” he said.

In 1950 in response to the refugees of World War II, the Australian Bishops wrote to the Catholic faithful,

“Patience, kindness, sympathy and practical help must be rendered to all unfailingly and in God’s Name”

This message remains true today.

“There are community based alternatives to detention and the Government needs to hear support for such initiatives from all Australians who believe in the dignity of human life” he said.

Fr Pettená urges the Australian Catholic faithful to pray for those still in detention and for an end to indefinite mandatory detention.

For media enquiries or to arrange an interview with Fr Maurizio Pettená CS,

please contact Beth Doherty on 0407 081 256



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