



MAY 2011

# AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC MIGRANT & REFUGEE OFFICE

## News

The official newsletter of the Australian Catholic Migrant & Refugee Office

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### Celebration of The Holy Eucharist

#### For the Multi-Cultural Communities of Australia

On the Occasion of the Pastoral Visit of His Excellency,  
Archbishop Antonio Maria Vegliò, President of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral  
Care of Migrants and Itinerant People

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE



The highlight of this last month has been the pastoral visit to migrant chaplains and communities by Archbishop Antonio Maria Vegliò, President and Fr Gabriele F. Bentoglio. C.S. Under-secretary, of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People.

This visit was planned at the request of the late Bishop Joseph Grech, he wanted very much for the Holy See to experience the vibrancy of the migrant communities in Australia; as well as the pastoral care to them by the bishops of Australia through a well programmed network of chaplaincies and multicultural centres. So the visit has been essentially a pastoral one.

In the words of Archbishop Vegliò, the visit was compared to a pilgrimage which took them to four archdioceses, Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney.

We might say that there have been three major highlights of this visit. First of all, the Archbishop Vegliò and Fr Bentoglio met with migrant chaplains and agents of pastoral care to migrants and refugees in Australia. Each had a chance to briefly introduce themselves and speak of the ministry they do and of the community they serve. This gave a breadth of the number of communities and how pastoral care is implemented. As a result of this, Archbishop Vegliò and Fr Bentoglio could notice how in each local church there is a variety of pastoral models that coexist well together within one reality. They could also see how migrants are not just recipients of pastoral care, but they are also agents themselves within the community and towards new comers.

In each city, they had an opportunity to taste the flavour of various activities. In Adelaide, we met and celebrated the Eucharist with various Asian communities at the Vietnamese Catholic Centre. In Brisbane, celebrations were held at the Maronite Catholic Centre. In Melbourne, we visited Spanish and Portuguese speaking communities and met with members of the Italian communities, before visiting the Polish and Croatian centres. In Melbourne we also had the possibility to visit one of the on shore detention centres for asylum seekers and to meet personally with three on them. The authorities of the centre gave Archbishop Vegliò and Fr Bentoglio a thorough explanation of how such centres work and a tour of the facilities.

In Sydney, after meeting with migrant chaplains at the Croatian Centre, Archbishop Vegliò and Fr Bentoglio met with Episcopal vicars' and directors of multicultural pastoral care in Australia. Bruce Ryan Executive Secretary of the Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life was present at the meeting and gave a presentation of how pastoral care of migrants and refugees fits within the total pastoral care of the Catholic Church in Australia.

A third important element of the visit was a multicultural celebration at St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney with Cardinal George Pell as the main celebrant, joined in by all the Bishops of Australia with the presence of over a thousand representatives from migrant communities who gave a colourful and vibrant manifestation of faith and culture.

The following day Archbishop Vegliò addressed the plenary of the Catholic Bishops Conference at the shrine of the newly canonised Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop. Archbishop Vegliò and Fr Bentoglio had also the opportunity to visit ACMRO in Canberra, and to meet with the staff. In Canberra, Archbishop Vegliò and Fr Bentoglio were hosted by the apostolic Nuncio.

I wish to thank migrant communities, chaplains, Episcopal vicars and directors and the staff of ACMRO, for their hard work in preparing this visit and for their enthusiasm in welcoming Archbishop Vegliò and Fr Bentoglio. My hope and prayer is that this visit not only contribute to deepen knowledge from the part of the Vatican dicastery of the pastoral care to migrants and refugees and their very presence in the Church in Australia, but contribute also to a national appreciation of the evangelising role of migrants in Australia.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr Maurizio Pettenà CS  
National Director  
Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office  
Consultant to the Pontifical Council for Migrants and Itinerant People





**Letter to migrant communities on the Occasion of the Pastoral Visit of His Excellency,  
Archbishop Antonio Maria Vegliò  
President of the Pontifical Council for the  
Pastoral Care  
of Migrants and Itinerant People  
May 2011**

**Dear brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ,**

I am happy to be with you today for this celebration of the Eucharist, in my capacity of President of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People. The Pope entrusted to me the task of leading this Dicastery of the Holy See that cares for those who are on the move for many reasons: migrants, refugees, nomads, seafarers, pilgrims and tourists, all those who live and work on the roads and on the streets. I am also happy to forward to you all the blessing of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI.

One of the most fascinating stories which opens the Old Testament is that of Abraham called by God. He was convinced that the way he lived did no longer correspond to the fulfilment of his life. It had to be changed. And he left the place familiar to him. He left the security of his life, the respect he enjoyed. He instead trusted on the promise of God. Abraham remained faithful, trusting Yahweh, the promise made. The path of Abraham introduced him to a new country and so he could become the father of the faithful. He was the first migrant of the history of salvation.

**His story, like that of every migrant man and woman, was all about promise and commitment, tempting and challenging. Something which is valid for all times, but also valid for each one of us. For me, but also for you.**

To look for the promised land which God wants to give to us. The promised land is the place where people are eager to do God's will; where people live together in peace. The place where people care for one another, where nobody lacks anything. It is where people are trying to make one another happy. In this sense, every region of the world could become a homeland, because it is the place where we receive and offer justice and peace, shelter and food, a job, a present and a future.

However, it has consequences. One of them is that one has to leave the familiar surroundings. One has to follow new avenues, to take a new course, change its life, in order to answer the new challenge.



**Photos: Rayla Barcelona**



However, it has consequences. One of them is that one has to leave the familiar surroundings. One has to follow new avenues, to take a new course, change its life, in order to answer the new challenge.

Jesus followed that way of Abraham. He answered the call of the Father like nobody else, day in and day out. He moved around, in all directions, without a place for himself. Witnessing to people of the blessings of the Father, reconciling and healing.

He was welcomed and applauded. However, also misunderstood and lonely. But he remained in relation with the Father.



Photo : Rayla Barcelona

The path of the apostles went first upwards. One day it happened that Jesus and three disciples went on the top of a mountain. On that mountain, the Tabor, the mystery of Jesus was revealed. The Son was shown in His true shape. The



disciples were able to see a glimpse of the intimacy that connects Father and Son.

**The glory of Jesus was shown to them. This happened when Moses and Elijah were talking with Jesus. They represented the law and the prophets, the long history of salvation of the Old Testament. They have met God in cloud and fire, in testing and in the deep silence of prayer. Both were men of God.**

That way of Moses and Elijah was also the way of Jesus. A desert road, a road through death. But carried by God's act of faithfulness. And his final resting place is not among us. His tomb is empty. Faithful unto death, Jesus entered the life, the eternal home of the Father.

Photo : Rayla Barcelona



A long way was waiting for Peter and the other disciples. They had to descend from the mountain and take up their responsibilities in the world. To witness of the glory of the Lord. Hardly grasping what it is going to be and what it means. Wiping away all tears, assisting those in need. A demanding task, which can ask everything. They could continue following Him because they remained committed, faithful to their call.



Such attitude is also requested of us. Listening to his voice, witnessing in society and moving to places and people where we are called to. And during this journey discovering and creating elements of His kingdom.



Photo: Damir Govorcin Catholic Weekly

My prayers, my best thoughts and wishes are with you along the journeys of your migrant life, together with the prayers and the support of the whole Church, where you stay in her very heart.

**Archbishop Antonio Maria Vegliò**

**President of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People.**

**May 2011**

Photo: Top Right and Right, Rayla Barcelona

**May we always realize that on our way we are accompanied by the God of life.**

May His presence be light in us so that we see what really matters, be the space in our heart so that we do not cut off ourselves from others.

Be fire in us, so that we do not lose the inspiration.

Keep that vision alive in us, so that we remain believing in the promise and moving towards the Kingdom of God's love.





## FROM BOAT PERSON TO CATHOLIC BISHOP

A Vietnamese refugee who came to Australia in a refugee boat has been appointed a Catholic Bishop in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen was 18 years old when he, and his family, fled communism in 1980.

The Apostolic Nunciature in Australia advised Archbishop Denis Hart yesterday that Pope Benedict XVI has appointed Fr Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv as Auxiliary Bishop in the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

Welcoming the appointment, Archbishop Denis Hart said today: ***"The appointment of Bishop Vincent as auxiliary in Melbourne is a historic one. He escaped from Vietnam by boat as a young man, came to Melbourne, joined the Conventual Franciscans, and has already given distinguished service as a pastor in Springvale, as a leader in his order and has made a generous and gifted contribution to the Church."***



"We welcome him warmly as he returns from Rome, and look forward to his ordination as Titular bishop of Tula in St Patrick's Cathedral on Thursday 23 June at 7.30pm. He is in our prayers at this important moment."

After the fall of Saigon, three brothers settled in Holland, a sister is still in Vietnam and his parents and a brother and a sister are in Melbourne.

In 1983, Bishop Nguyen became a Conventual Franciscan friar and studied for the priesthood in Melbourne.

After his priestly ordination on 30 December 1989, he was sent to Rome for further studies and was awarded a licentiate in Christology and Spirituality from the Pontifical Faculty of St Bonaventure.

He served as a parish priest for 4 years in Kellyville NSW and for 7 years in Springvale.

He was elected superior of the Order of Friars Minor Conventuals in Australia in 2005.

Since 2008, he has been in Rome serving as Assistant General, responsible for the Asia-Oceania section of order.

The Bishop returns to Melbourne from Rome at the end of May.

Article by James O'Farrell



## Most Rev Gerard Hanna DD

Bishop of Wagga Wagga

Delegate of the Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference has confirmed Bishop Gerard Hanna as the Bishop delegate of the Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office. The following homily was given by Bishop Hanna at the celebration of the Holy Eucharist for the multi-cultural communities of Australia.

**St Mary's Cathedral Sydney**

**Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2011**

**JN 6 30-35**

Our Lord Jesus Christ was not an impractical idealist. He understood better than any, the importance of economic conditions – He knew what grinding poverty and fearing for one's life can do to the human spirit. He knew, too, the perils associated with irresponsible prosperity, and

was at least as concerned about the second as He was the first. Our Lord's primary concern was that people not lose sight of the things that last. He urged His disciples to work for: "food that remains unto eternal life."

Obviously He did not have in mind anything that can be bought with money. He was talking about the value by which we live. He called it *"food that the Son of Man will give you:"* The Bread of Life. When we hear that phrase our first thought is of the Eucharist. Rightly so. But the Eucharist is expansive. Jesus says: *"I am the Bread of Life, whoever comes to me will never be hungry and whoever believes in me will never thirst."* Jesus, the true Bread which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.



Living this truth compels us, who seek to be Christlike in every way, to walk with those who seek to emerge from the darkness of lives constantly threatened by poverty, starvation, persecution and violence. Hence the Church's commitment to Migrants and Refugees.

Photos: Rayla Barcelona



The Church in Australia welcomes your Excellency Archbishop Vegliò, President

of the Pontifical Council for Migrants and Itinerant People – and Under-Secretary: Fr Gabriele Bentoglio. Your expressed wish to visit Migrant communities and chaplains in Australia gives point to our commitment to offer pastoral care, including advocacy, for Migrants and Refugees who come to our shores. Your presence is testimony to the commitment to

control, seek a safe and sustainable life.

While acknowledging the difficulties faced by the Minister and the Department in serving the nation responsibly on this issue, it is becoming clear that there are other options – apart from mandatory detention of asylum seekers - that will support the necessity of government policies geared to the protection of all Australians.

Sri Lankan Community Dancers

Photo: Damir Govorcin  
Catholic Weekly



engage in pastoral care by the world-wide Church towards itinerant people. This commitment was framed by the teaching of Blessed John Paul II when he wrote:

*“Concern for Refugees must lead us to re-affirm and highlight universally recognised human rights, and to ask that the effective recognition of these rights be guaranteed to itinerant people.”*

The competing points of view that currently comprise the debate in Australia regarding the treatment of Migrants and Refugees, reflect the emphasis by Government on the issues of Border Security and Responsible Control of incoming itinerant people to this country. But asylum seekers are people created in the likeness of God, deserving of dignity and, owing to circumstances beyond their

The position of the Catholic Church is clear on this matter:

*“..... the challenge is to combine the welcome due to every human being, especially those in need, with a reckoning of what is necessary for both the local inhabitants and new arrivals to live a dignified and promising life, in peace.”*

The advocacy role of the Catholic Church and other concerned agencies, is bearing fruit. The Ministry of Immigration and Citizenship has expressed concern and understanding around the frustrations of detainees. A genuine effort is being made to relieve the tensions by reducing numbers in camps and speeding up the process of security clearance.



There is a commitment from Government – yet to be fully implemented – to use detention for the shortest possible time, to establish that asylum seekers pose no health or security risk. This has the desired result that those posing no threat to the broader community would be able to remain in the community while their status is resolved.

The Catholic Church supports the Federal Government in every move that promotes a more humane alternative to detention centres. It is to be hoped that more appropriate ways of dealing with refugees, will open the way to a more positive appreciation of what our migrants have to offer. For many years, we as a nation have endorsed multiculturalism. Assimilation has given way to integration. Migrants are urged to maintain their cultural identity and to contribute to the social enrichment of the nation.

In 2004, the Pontifical Council for Migrants and Itinerant Peoples promulgated an instruction: (titled) “Erga Migrante Caritas Christi”

In its essence the instruction confirms that human mobility is not some sort of aberration, but rather is a constitutive element of the history of salvation, and a genuine field for enquiry in the discipline of Pastoral Theology. For the vibrant spirit of the human heart will ever seek to look to new horizons, to face new challenges, to want something more, to do better.

Blessed Pope John Paul II said as much in 1986 when visiting Australia. He referred to those many immigrants, displaced persons and refugees, marked by that cross and suffering that he described as the experience of fire and iron. People who struggled to emerge from hardship and persecution; who dared to believe that through their sacrifice, they would lay the foundation for a better homeland, for a better world, a more humane world.

In Australia the faith of the Church has travelled from afar. It has struck roots which have emerged with a distinctive character and which have the robust quality of successful

transplants. There is new fervour in our quest for justice and peace. There are prophetic voices in our midst seeking reconciliation for past wrongs; we seek a unity among Christians based on our common love of Christ and we constantly discover in prayer, the Transforming Spirit – the inestimable treasure we bear within us – vessels of clay that we are.

The Church of Jesus Christ is “catholic”; expressive of the universal dimension of being open to men and women of the world. A fraternal society of established communities and migrants, of diverse language backgrounds, cultures and traditions; representing, nevertheless, a concrete witness by a communion that finds richness in diversity. Persevering in this vein, we remain true to our vocation to work for that Kingdom of which our Saviour speaks:

**an eternal and universal kingdom,  
a kingdom of truth and life,  
a kingdom of holiness and grace,  
a kingdom of justice, love and peace.**



*Bishop Hanna presenting his Homily,*  
Photo: Beth Doherty



If you ask an Australian student to guess who is Australian from a group that includes a “white” Christian, a Jew and a Muslim, 80 to 90% will guess that only the “white” Christian is Australian. This is only one of many attitudes that Together for Humanity’s educational programs are changing.

The work of the Together for Humanity Foundation was started in 2001, after Rabbi Zalman Kastel, a Hasidic Jew, was approached by a Catholic theology student who was interested in his perspective on living out God’s word with compassion. This encounter and others like it led Rabbi Kastel to join with people of other faiths to get the message of living peacefully with diversity to a wide audience.

Together for Humanity focuses on values shared between the three “Abrahamic” faiths (Muslim, Christian and Jewish), Indigenous peoples and all Australians. The Foundation tries to raise awareness of the commonality between the faiths, and demonstrate how to overcome the tensions.

Making a promise to God, Rabbi Kastel stepped out of his comfort zone to persevere on the path to prepare the next generation for the challenges of dealing with diversity, and, so far, Together for Humanity has engaged with over 60,000 students.

Together For Humanity is concerned about how the combination of discrimination and powerlessness can be a very potent mix working to break a person's spirit:

*“Our team visited the old theatre in Yass with it's two levels and four doors. The upstairs level was for the rich and white, the downstairs level for the blacks and poor. But, each level has two doors, one for the Catholics and the other for the Protestants. A couple in Yass is renovating this theatre, and had a local Indigenous leader come to view the renovations. As he walked up the stairs, he had tears in his eyes. He had lived in the town his all life, but he never been upstairs.”*

**WHO WE ARE** Together for Humanity is a not for profit, multi-faith organisation that helps young people to replace prejudice with respect, and encourages them to cooperate for the common good. We are an inclusive organisation, happy to work with anyone who reflects our shared values.

**WHAT WE DO** We host workshops for students using a combination of people from their own background and less familiar people, to demonstrate that difference is interesting rather than threatening and that we can all be friends with people who are different from ourselves. This is especially relevant for students who live in mono-cultural environments (including “ethnic enclaves”), as it allows students to meet people and fellow students from cultures and religions that are different from their own.





Having acceptance of "the other" as part of its core values, Together for Humanity works with students across the country to help bring a better understanding of people from diverse backgrounds and encourages students to cooperate for the common good. If the architects of this theatre over 100 years ago had the opportunity to be at one of our programs, they would no doubt re-think their plans for the building!

Here is another true story, which highlights some of the stereotypes that we try to break down in our work:

*"There is a 14 year old boy in WA, who had just returned to school after being suspended for racism. Together for Humanity Presenters- a Muslim, a Christian and a Jew- invited his class to guess whom of the presenters was Australian. Most of them assumed that to be Australian meant being white. We put up a barrier between the Muslim presenter and the group to symbolize that he was seen as an outsider. We asked the students to think about what the word Australian can mean. One suggested it meant having a beer with your mates. We overheard the boy who just came back from being suspended for racism say to his friend, "but that would mean we are not Australian because we're under age, so we can't drink.""*



Despite our best intentions in teaching kids to respect others, they need to have the face-to-face interaction and time for conversation with people from other faiths, which we provide in school presentations. Together for Humanity is also creating an online resource that will tie in with the National Curriculum to help students prepare for a diverse world, and also allow them to interact with people of different faiths to their own in a virtual world.

We constantly see that after our program, students are more willing to engage and honor others, and their natural curiosity leads them to realize that despite our differences, we can still learn to get along with each other. We encourage students to step out of their comfort zone, as Rabbi Kastel did in 2001, to ask the difficult questions and to open their hearts to "the other".

*If you would like to know more about Together for Humanity, please contact Rabbi Zalman Kastel on (02) 9886 7414, or check our website: [www.togetherforhumanity.org.au](http://www.togetherforhumanity.org.au)*



TOGETHER FOR HUMANITY



Interact and get involved with us on Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Together-For-Humanity/33390177037>

Article by Felicity Evans and Rabbi Zalman Kastel

## Reflection on the Malaysian Solution: Fr Maurizio Pettena CS

### Media Release

26 May, 2011

Of fundamental importance in any policy dealing with forced migration is the dignity of human life. Through a commitment to respect and build up people from all nations, the global phenomenon of migration, voluntary or compelled, can be successfully managed and beneficial. It remains essential for Australia to hear asylum seekers when they knock at our door.

The Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office acknowledge the purpose of the Australian government's negotiations with Malaysia is to address people smuggling. The journey of a refugee places them in precarious situations and it is important for nations to pursue the safety and protection of forced migrants. This concern for their welfare must not stop at our border.

The Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office acknowledges the policy of sending the next 800 boat arrivals to Malaysia might be a deterrent for further boat arrivals. However cannot condone this policy; as essentially swapping human life goes against the moral teaching of the Church.

ACMRO has grave concerns for the welfare of the potential 800 candidates that may be sent to Malaysia due to the already heavy burden that Malaysia carries. While Malaysia appears willing to uphold the key aspect of the Refugee Convention to not return asylum seekers to the origin of danger; this alone does not afford asylum seekers the opportunity of a sustainable life.

The burden of irregular migration flows is one which needs to be shared more equally between countries based on their capacity to care for asylum seekers.

Australia has one of the most successful resettlement programs in the world and it is appropriate that the number of refugees under this program be increased. Australia is better placed than other countries in the region to resettle refugees due to the economic success underpinning our Nation.

The negotiations between Australia and Malaysia represent a bilateral agreement and a step towards a regional framework for managing and protecting forced migrants. Any regional framework is likely to include countries that are not signatory to the Refugee Convention. What is not negotiable, is the welfare, dignity and respect of migrants both forced and voluntary.

It is important to remember that people smuggling is merely a symptom of the underlying problem of war, poverty and inequality in the world. This underlying problem does not disappear by decreasing boat arrivals to Australia.

The people smuggler business model is diminished by increasing Australia's humanitarian intake. By providing desperate people with a valid pathway into Australia they do not need to risk their lives on a boat.

Irregular flows of forced migrants do not continue indefinitely; but how we respond as a nation will be remembered.

