

Liturgy Notes for Refugee & Migrant Sunday

28 August 2005

Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

The following notes may be of use to link 22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time with Refugee and Migrant Sunday 2005.

Welcome

(A member of the parish or school who is a migrant or refugee could give this introduction)

Today is the 22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time. It is also the day the Australian Bishops invite us to pray for refugees and migrants to our country.

The population of Australia has a rich cultural mix, thanks to the refugees and migrants who have made this country their home over the years. Many of us are refugees, or the descendants of refugees.

Today, let us celebrate the richness of our nation, with its population of people from various countries, races, cultures and religions. Let us pray that we can continue to share Australia with immigrants and refugees; with people who do not look like us; with persons of other faiths. Let us resolve to be inclusive, to welcome the stranger, and to create an harmonious and multicultural nation which offers freedom, peace, democracy and opportunity to all.

Entrance Procession

The Entrance Procession could include parishioners or students of different nationalities in national dress and/or carrying national flags.

Liturgy of the Word

The theme of each Reading is given in italics. It is not intended that these become part of the Liturgy of the Word.

Jeremiah 20:7-9 *Jeremiah comes to understand through experience the demands of responding to God's call. The word of the Lord is "a fire burning in my heart", which he cannot control and to which he ultimately surrenders.*

Romans 12:1-2 *Paul speaks of changing our behaviour, of being transformed by "the new mind" that comes to us through responding to the Word of God.*

Matthew 16:21-27 *To be a follower of Christ, we need to listen to the Word of God and start thinking in "God's way".*

Homily Notes

As Christians, we respond to God's call by welcoming the Word of God into our hearts, being attentive to it and allowing it to change and renew us. What we hear stirs our hearts and motivates our actions.

It would seem that many Australians today label genuine refugees as illegal immigrants, support their indefinite detention and look on new residents with an

unfounded fear that they may be terrorists. These three readings invite us to respond to the Word of God by changing our way of life and our way of thinking.

Perhaps the greatest cause of division is dwelling on one another's differences. On the cross, Jesus' outstretched arms embraced everyone. All human beings are equal in God's sight, making it wrong to discriminate against people on the basis of nationality, race or religion. Jesus Christ is more than any particular culture, social movement, political party or religious affiliation. The challenge for us as Christians is to recognise the dignity of every human person, and to welcome and accept all cultural and ethnic groups. The gospel invites us to put aside our way of life for "God's way".

Prayer of the Faithful

Any or all of the following could be added (keeping in mind the local assembly who gathers).

- We pray that the human dignity of each person will be recognised and upheld.
- We pray for refugees, that God's presence will give comfort in their insecurity, and that our efforts will offer hope and bring justice.
- We pray for the people of Australia that they be generous in their response to people of other lands seeking refuge in Australia.
- We pray for Australia that it may continue to be blessed with freedom, good leadership and responsible citizens.
- We pray that concern for the common good will permeate negotiations among nations and between people.

Sign of Peace

Participants could be invited to offer one another a sign of peace, using their first language and traditional/cultural gesture.

Concluding Rites

The Missal contains a number of solemn blessings and prayers over the people. During the concluding rites, these forms could be utilized, giving special emphasis to members of the assembly who have migrated or are refugees.

Languages

In many parishes and schools there is a range of languages spoken. Some of these could be incorporated into the liturgy, always respecting its structure and balance. A reading could be read in another language, and the English translation included in the bulletin or electronically. Some of the general intercessions could be translated into another language and prayed. Parts of the Mass, especially the *Lord have mercy, Holy, Holy* and *Lamb of God* could be sung in another language. The assembly could be taught the appropriate refrains and responses, so that all are engaged in worship.