

2002

Message

**Refugee and Migrant Sunday
Pope John Paul's Message
for World Day of Migration 2002**

*Fr. John J. Murphy, Director
Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office
Bishops Committee for Migrants and Refugees*

20 June 2002

POPE JOHN PAUL'S MESSAGE FOR WORLD DAY OF MIGRATION 2002. [3092]

The theme set by the Holy Father for 2002 is Migration and Inter-Religious Dialogue. The message acknowledges the impact of globalisation which has meant that many cultures, religions and races are having to develop ways of living together peacefully. Barriers of diffidence, prejudice and fear must be removed, the Holy Father says. "Dialogue is the leading way to follow, and the Church invites us to walk this path in order to move from diffidence to respect, from rejection to welcome.

Australian Catholic Bishops' Statement [3093]

In March 2002, the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference released a Statement entitled "Refugees and Asylum Seekers". In releasing the Statement, Archbishop Francis Carroll, President of the Conference, said: "Clearly we need to be more sensitive to the plight of (asylum seekers), many of whom have experienced hardship and pain most of us would find difficult to comprehend. There needs to be a more determined effort to recognize the human dignity and rights of our sisters and brothers from other countries and to enable them to live with dignity and in safety as valued members of the human family". The Archbishop went on to point out that "the challenge.....is not only for the Government but for the whole Australian Community. As part of that community, the Catholic Church pledges its continuing support for these suffering people".

The Bishops recommended to the Federal Government that the yearly humanitarian [3094] quota be increased from 12,000 to at least 20,000, a figure which Australia has accepted in the past. They also addressed the detention of asylum seekers, the sending of asylum seekers to other countries such as Nauru and Papua New Guinea, and other restrictive measures.

The following message of support was received from Archbishop Stephen Fumio [3095] Hamao, President of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People: "The Bishops' strong statements in this touching appeal, the pertinent presentation of numerous aspects related to the institute of asylum, and the competent description of the international scene show a constant attention to the dramatic necessities of these marginalized people as well as a deep and lived

awareness of the prophetic mission of the Church. Please be assured that our prayers accompany the follow-up of the Statement that it may contribute to forming the conscience of the members of the Government and of the Australian people”.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Rev. John J. Murphy
Director

Source: Archives of the Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office (ACMRO), Canberra, Australia.
