

1967

A Brief Statement

## **Immigration Sunday**

**26th February**

*Federal Catholic Immigration Committee  
For Reading in All Churches*

26 February 1967

### **Immigration Sunday —1967** [\[2773\]](#)

Today is Immigration Sunday, with its reminder, once more, of the serious and extensive problems associated with migration, in its multiple forms. Year after year—for the 18th time in fact—we have observed this annual commemoration. Not unreasonably, it might be queried whether, after this succession of commemorations, we need still to be reminded of migration, its nature and our obligations in respect to it.

### **Holy Father—Vatican Council** [\[2774\]](#)

Quite recently, the Holy Father spoke of migration as one of the most important and serious aspects in world life.

During the Vatican Council, which concluded last year, voices were raised frequently, from among the two thousand assembled bishops, to stress the need of reminding the Christian world of the great social moral and religious implications of migration, which, too often, is viewed purely from the economic angle. [\[2775\]](#)

### **Ignorance** [\[2776\]](#)

We in Australia, as the host country, annually, to some 150,000 permanent and long-term settlers and with, approximately, two million post-war settlers already here, certainly need reminders of our duties; as also, indeed, do newcomers themselves. Moreover, we, as part of the World Family, must concern ourselves with old and new problems created by population movements.

Mobility is a notable characteristic of our age; it involves masses of people of the countries of Eastern and Western Europe, of Africa, of the Middle and Far East, and most of Asia. [\[2777\]](#)

Whilst much of modern population movement is spontaneous and planned, a great part of it is anything but spontaneous; it is enforced and without choice. The human tide of refugees, of modern times, is rising, not falling. [\[2778\]](#)

### **Refugees** [\[2779\]](#)

During the past year alone one million refugees received direct help from the

United Nations High Commission for Refugees, whilst the number of those helped by Voluntary Agencies would be even greater.

To this rising human tide of refugees may be joined also the huge flood of foreign workers, from the less-developed countries of Europe to the highly industrialised areas, with plentiful employment and high rates of pay. [2780]

Recent figures give the number of these workers as 4 millions; additionally, there is the somewhat regular intra-European migration of some one and a half million persons, who, each year, transfer from Southern Europe to the northern countries, where they must settle in an environment greatly differing from their own, socially and religiously. [2781]

Whether, then, it be question of the refugee, fleeing persecution and seeking freedom, a figure of dignity in his determination and courage; the foreign worker, accepting temporary exile in his need for gainful employment or the immigrant moving by free decision for settlement in Australia, each one, in greater or lesser degree, suffers dislocation and upset of his physical and moral life. [2782]

We, of a great migrant-receiving country, must remain ever mindful of these dislocations and problems and be ever ready with friendliness and understanding for all whose condition is one of grave anxiety, intense loneliness, and general need of human support. [2783]

### **Losing People** [2784]

A report issued in October last by the Commonwealth Advisory Council revealed that there has been a sharp increase in the number of settlers leaving Australia, mainly to return home, but some also to re-settle elsewhere. Whilst many of these returnees left because of irresistible circumstances, others left because they could not adjust to life in Australia; theirs was a problem of human terms and one that was avoidable and preventable.

It is disturbing to hear of people leaving Australia, where the greatest national need is population; Australia's best investment is people. [2785]

Australia cannot afford the loss of people. Neither can Australia allow cause to be given for settlers to be dissatisfied and unhappy in the country to which they bring a precious ontribution in their persons and their skills and into which, in consequence, they have a right of gradual and harmonious integration. [2786]

Assuredly this report gives reason for the officially announce re-examination of all procedures concerned with the recruitment, reception and settlement of immigrants. [2787]

It gives cause, as well, for each of us individually, and in our voluntary organisations, to re-appraise our personal attitudes, approaches and quality of assistance towards our settlers. [2788]

Implicit in the departing of dissatisfied people is a challenge to Australians to maintain, always, towards newcomers, that measure of friendliness and helpfulness [2789]

which is at once, a requirement of our on bond of human origin and a dictate of the precept of Christian Charity.

Again to quote Pope Paul, “Migrants contend with great difficulties and new dangers; in strongly tending towards better living conditions they easily become confused in ideas and principles; judgments are unbalanced; religious practices are neglected; not infrequently there arises and develops an antipathy and bitterness towards a society in which they have failed, so far to find a normal and satisfying place; they do not feel they belong. A need of to-day, urgent and pressing, is relief for refugees, and assistance for migrants. This is an appeal which,” declares His Holiness, “must find an attentive audience for the love of Christ, our Lord, Who becomes—

A Sufferer in the Refugee,  
A Pilgrim in the Migrant, and  
a Needy person in the Anxious and Lonely.”

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

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