

1970

A Brief Statement

**Migration Sunday 1970**

**22nd February**

*Bishops' Committee for Social and Charitable Works*

22 February 1970

Today, as annually during the past twenty years, we have the observance of Migration Day with its call for our personal involvement in migration work and more particularly, with migrants and their many and serious problems. [2798]

A first concern should be that of the spiritual well being of migrants, to which, rather inseparably, is joined their material welfare. [2799]

Spiritual well being implies a continuance or renewal of their religious practices in their former homeland. [2800]

Essentially the Church is a missionary Church, obeying its Divine Founder's mandate of preaching the Gospel to every creature and bearing in mind the injunction that "*none shall be lost of those given to Her.*" [2801]

Understandably, the migrant, being obliged to lend so much of his energies to establishing himself and his dependants with the least delay in the material things of life may quite easily fail to give sufficient time or thought to his religious practices and so become careless and indifferent as a Catholic. Even with the best intentions of remaining faithful to his religion, the migrant will find himself a stranger in the new atmosphere and the unaccustomed usages of his new parish Church — more so now with the full use of English in the Mass and religious ceremonies. [2802]

In such circumstances and in the prevalent climate of permissiveness and moral indifferentism, the migrant stands in serious need of kindly personal assistance of pastors and parishioners alike. [2803]

It is in this field of real need that our lay people may well exercise a true apostolate and verify in their activities their designation "as the arms given by God and the Church, to the mind and the heart of the Pastor". [2804]

The combined efforts of the parish clergy and the National Chaplains, zealous and untiring as they may be, are insufficient for an adequate pastoral care of the thousands of migrants living amongst us in almost every part of the Continent. [2805]

Fraternal concern, guidance and support, in a truly Christ-like approach, should be extended to all newcomers. [2806]

Where it is a question of fellow Catholics, steps should be taken to bring them into a closer relationship with parochial life, so that they will have a sense of belonging, of being “at home in their Master’s House” and fully a part, as well of their present religious community, social as well as religious. [2807]

Catholic people should be found in the forefront of all work amongst migrants, and rather especially in what concerns their spiritual well being. In this, they show forth as real and living, the marks of the Church Universal—”One and Catholic”. [2808]

These endeavours, related as they are to the human society, individual and collective, are, in the final analysis, an enterprise inextricably joined with the extension of Christ’s Kingdom on earth; they are an exercise of the lay apostolate; they take on, in practice, much of what is inferred in Our Lord’s words: [2809]

*“As often as you did it to one of these, you did it to Me.” (Matt. XXV 40.)*

**P. M. O’DONNELL,**  
Archbishop of Brisbane  
Deputy for Migration

---

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

---