

1976

A Brief Statement

Immigration Sunday

29th February

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Bishops' Commission for Social and Charitable Works*

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Today is Immigration Sunday.

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This annual commemoration instituted over twenty-five years ago, serves to remind us once again of the grave human problems associated with migration in its multiple forms. It is a day for rediscovering our personal obligations of care and concern for the some four million persons of diverse national origins who, in the post war years particularly, have made Australia their home; also the thousands upon thousands of refugees around the world who are in search of homes and a secure future.

Australia's reception of large numbers of settlers and refugees is an achievement most worthy of Government and people alike. Worthier still, however, is it that no limit be set to the admission of people except, perhaps, that of a generous people's willingness and a Country's capacity, to achieve maximum population. Above all else, let there be no limits whenever families in their thousands are homeless and without prospect of a future for themselves and their children.

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Whilst it is clear that God, the Creator of heaven and earth, distributed the riches of the earth according to a varied pattern, He intended the earth and all it contains for men's use and benefit, that is, for each and every man, for all people.

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"If someone who had the riches of this world sees his brother in need and closes his heart to him, how does the love of God abide in him?" (Jn. 3.17)

In this affirmation of man's Christian duty towards his neighbour, is the implication that affluent nations abounding in resources, as is Australia, shall open their doors to peoples from lands poor in resources and shall grant asylum to those made homeless through oppression or other forms of tyranny.

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In duty to our neighbor let us, on this Immigration Day, give generously to the appeal for funds for Catholic Migration work. On the social and community level, let us extend a personal and friendly welcome to all newcomers and, whenever possible, help them in establishing themselves happily and securely as part of the family of the Australian Nation. Very especially, let us unite in frequent prayers for their spiritual and temporal well-being and that of the increasing thousands of refugees adrift in today's troubled world, without possessions, without future and

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without hope

“As often as you did it to one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it to me.”
(Matt.XXV.40)

For the Australian Episcopal Conference Commission for Social and Charitable Works

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