

1999

Message

### **Refugee and Migrant Sunday**

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

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The theme set by the Holy Father for 1999 is “the importance of the parish in welcoming the stranger”. His message provides points for inclusion in the homily on Refugee and Migrant Sunday. For example, in section 6, paragraph 3, he says: *“The importance of the parish in welcoming the stranger, in integrating baptised persons from different cultures, and in dialoguing with believers of other religions, stems from the mission of every parish community and its significance within society. This is not an optional, supplementary role for the parish community, but a duty inherent in its task as an institution.”* [2954]

In recent months, Australia has provided temporary haven for about 4000 refugees from Kosovo. I am sure that, as well as helping the refugees, this humanitarian response has helped many Australians to be more compassionate and understanding. The Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs has thanked the organisations and individuals who have contributed in a multitude of different ways. Among those who were given special mention was the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. [2955]

It is regrettable that the well-publicised dissatisfaction of a few Kosovars in Singleton NSW caused some generalised bitterness to be expressed in the media, even though the majority of Kosovars were insistent on expressing their gratitude to Australia. In any case, do we make the expression of gratitude a condition for helping people who have been through horrendous experiences? That is not the example which Jesus Christ gave us. [2956]

As the National Office responsible for the coordination of Refugee and Migrant Sunday in the Catholic Church, we would be grateful for comments from you on how to improve the celebration of the day in future. I thank you for your cooperation. [2957]

Yours sincerely in Christ,

**Rev. John J. Murphy**  
Director

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

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