



# AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

## Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office



### What the Catholic Church Teaches on Asylum and Migration Media Release 26 March, 2014

The Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office (ACMRO) launch a pamphlet today on what the Catholic Church teaches about the pastoral care and rights of asylum seekers and migrants.

The pamphlet is titled: 'I was a stranger and you welcomed me' (Matthew 25:35). It represents a summary of 100 years of Catholic social teaching on the issue of migration.

Speaking ahead of the launch, Fr Maurizio Pettenà, National Director of the Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office (ACMRO), said the Catholic Church has a well-defined teaching on asylum and migration, which the pamphlet summarises.

"We want to make the Catholic Church teaching on the issue widely accessible, through the pamphlet, to Australian Catholics and those interested in what the church is saying on this particularly controversial issue."

Guest speakers at the launch will include: Najeeba Wazefadost; Winner of the 2011 Young Woman of the West Award, Aloysious Mowe; Director of the Jesuit Refugee Service, and Bishop Gerald Hanna; Australian Catholic Bishops Delegate for Migrants and Refugees.

"Sadly the treatment of people arriving on our shores seeking protection and safety has drifted far from the ideals proclaimed by the Church in its teaching and based on the dignity and rights of the human being," Fr Pettenà said.

"For too long in Australia, the debate around asylum seekers has focused narrowly on policy and political concern. For the Catholic Church, this is a human issue. The focus should be on the respect deserved by every human being," Fr Pettenà added.

Over the coming weeks the pamphlet will be distributed to Catholic parishes and agencies, educational institutions and politicians across Australia.

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