103rd WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES



CHILD MIGRANTS, THE VULNERABLE AND THE VOICELESS

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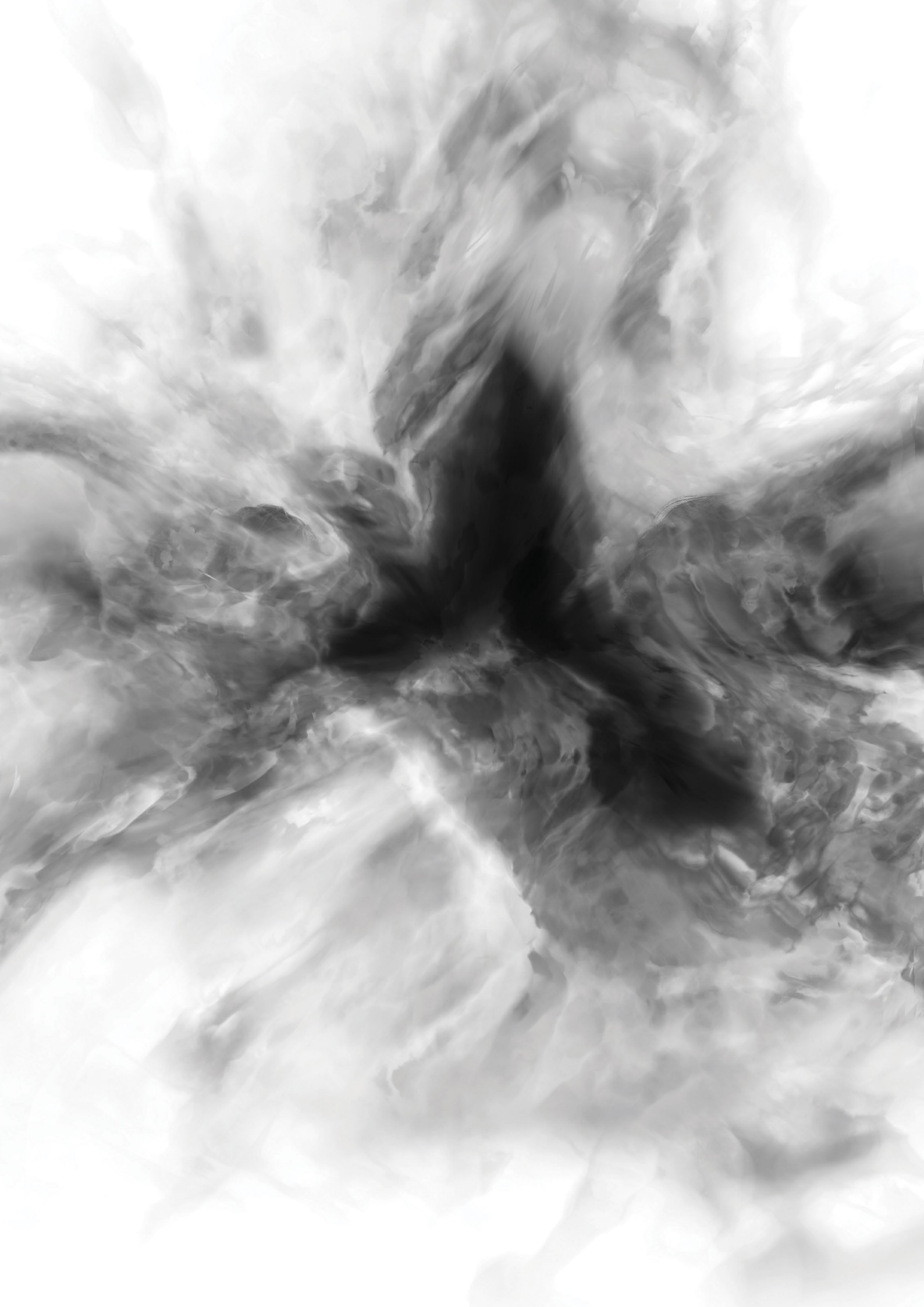


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MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR THE WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES 2017

"Child Migrants, the Vulnerable and the Voiceless"

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

"Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me." (*Mk 9:37; cf. Mt 18:5; Lk 9:48; Jn 13:20*). With these words, the Evangelists remind the Christian community of Jesus' teaching, which both inspires and challenges. This phrase traces the sure path which leads to God; it begins with the smallest and, through the grace of our Saviour, it grows into the practice of welcoming others. To be welcoming is a necessary condition for making this journey a concrete reality: God made himself

one of us. In Jesus God became a child, and the openness of faith to God, which nourishes hope, is expressed in loving proximity to the smallest and the weakest. Charity, faith and hope are all actively present in the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, as we have rediscovered during the recent Extraordinary Jubilee.

But the Evangelists reflect also on the responsibility of the one who works against mercy: "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin: it is better for him to have a great millstone fastened round his neck and be drowned in the depth of the sea" (*Mt 18:6; cf. Mk 9:42; Lk 17:2*). How can we ignore this severe warning when we see the exploitation carried out by unscrupulous people? Such exploitation harms young girls and boys who are led into prostitution or into the mire of pornography; who are enslaved as child labourers or soldiers; who are caught up in drug trafficking and other forms of criminality; who are forced to flee from conflict and persecution, risking isolation and abandonment.

For this reason, on the occasion of the annual World Day of Migrants and Refugees, I feel compelled to draw attention to the reality of child migrants, especially the ones who are alone. In doing so I ask everyone to take care of the young, who in a threefold way are defenceless: they are children, they are foreigners, and they have no means to protect themselves. I ask everyone to help those who, for various reasons, are forced to live far from their homeland and are separated from their families.

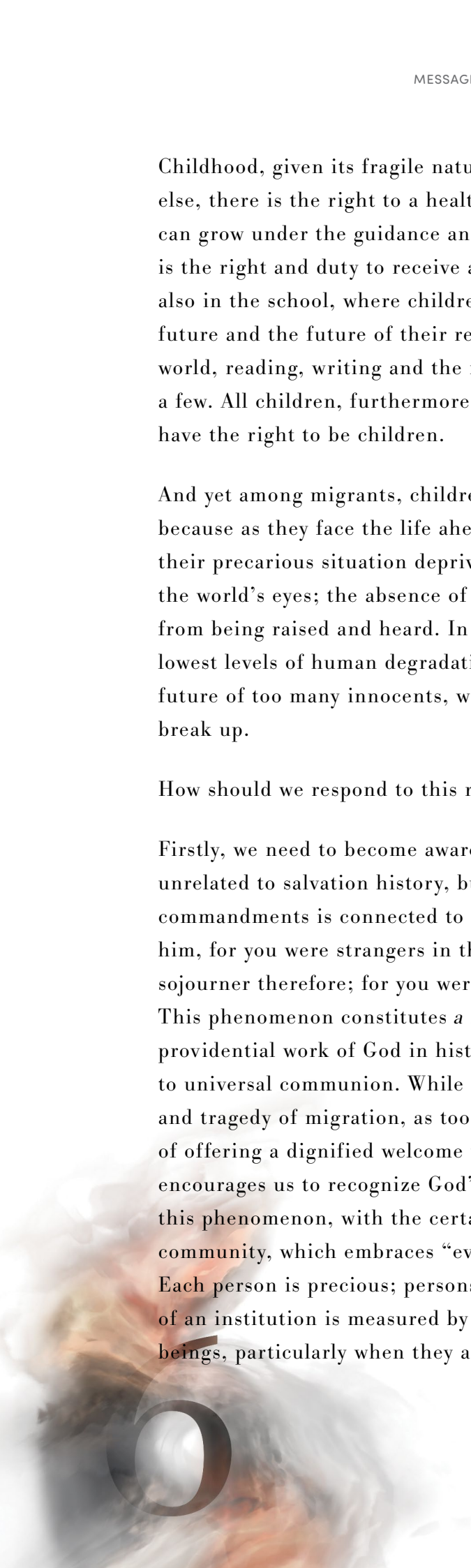
Migration today is not a phenomenon limited to some areas of the planet. It affects all continents and is growing into a tragic situation of global proportions. Not only does this concern those looking for dignified work or better living conditions, but also men and women, the elderly and children, who are forced to leave their homes in the hope of finding safety, peace and security. Children are the first among those to pay the heavy toll of emigration, almost always caused by violence, poverty, environmental conditions, as well as the negative aspects of globalization. The unrestrained competition for quick and easy profit brings with it the cultivation of perverse scourges such as child trafficking, the exploitation and abuse of minors and, generally, the depriving of rights intrinsic to childhood as sanctioned by the International Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Childhood, given its fragile nature, has unique and inalienable needs. Above all else, there is the right to a healthy and secure family environment, where a child can grow under the guidance and example of a father and a mother; then there is the right and duty to receive adequate education, primarily in the family and also in the school, where children can grow as persons and agents of their own future and the future of their respective countries. Indeed, in many areas of the world, reading, writing and the most basic arithmetic is still the privilege of only a few. All children, furthermore, have the right to recreation; in a word, they have the right to be children.

And yet among migrants, children constitute the most vulnerable group, because as they face the life ahead of them, they are invisible and voiceless: their precarious situation deprives them of documentation, hiding them from the world's eyes; the absence of adults to accompany them prevents their voices from being raised and heard. In this way, migrant children easily end up at the lowest levels of human degradation, where illegality and violence destroy the future of too many innocents, while the network of child abuse is difficult to break up.

How should we respond to this reality?

Firstly, we need to become aware that the phenomenon of migration is not unrelated to salvation history, but rather a part of that history. One of God's commandments is connected to it: "You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (*Ex* 22:21); "Love the sojourner therefore; for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt". (*Deut* 10:19). This phenomenon constitutes *a sign of the times*, a sign which speaks of the providential work of God in history and in the human community, with a view to universal communion. While appreciating the issues, and often the suffering and tragedy of migration, as too the difficulties connected with the demands of offering a dignified welcome to these persons, the Church nevertheless encourages us to recognize God's plan. She invites us to do this precisely amidst this phenomenon, with the certainty that no one is a stranger in the Christian community, which embraces "every nation, tribe, people and tongue" (*Rev* 7:9). Each person is precious; persons are more important than things, and the worth of an institution is measured by the way it treats the life and dignity of human beings, particularly when they are vulnerable, as in the case of child migrants.



Furthermore, we need to work towards *protection, integration and long-term solutions.*

We are primarily concerned with adopting every possible measure to guarantee the *protection and safety* of child migrants, because "these boys and girls often end up on the street abandoned to themselves and prey to unscrupulous exploiters who often transform them into the object of physical, moral and sexual violence." (Benedict XVI, Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 2008).

Moreover, the dividing line between migration and trafficking can at times be very subtle. There are many factors which contribute to making migrants vulnerable, especially if they are children: poverty and the lack of means to survive – to which are added unrealistic expectations generated by the media; the low level of literacy; ignorance of the law, of the culture and frequently of the language of host countries. All of this renders children physically and psychologically dependent. But the most powerful force driving the exploitation and abuse of children is demand. If more rigorous and effective action is not taken against those who profit from such abuse, we will not be able to stop the multiple forms of slavery where children are the victims.

It is necessary, therefore, for immigrants to cooperate ever more closely with the communities that welcome them, for the good of their own children. We are deeply grateful to organizations and institutions, both ecclesial and civil, that commit time and resources to protect minors from various forms of abuse. It is important that evermore effective and incisive cooperation be implemented, based not only on the exchange of information, but also on the reinforcement of networks capable of assuring timely and specific intervention; and this, without underestimating the strength that ecclesial communities reveal especially when they are united in prayer and fraternal communion.

Secondly, we need to work for the *integration* of children and youngsters who are migrants. They depend totally on the adult community. Very often the scarcity of financial resources prevents the adoption of adequate policies aimed at assistance and inclusion. As a result, instead of favouring the social integration of child migrants, or programmes for safe and assisted repatriation, there is simply an attempt to curb the entrance of migrants, which in turn fosters illegal networks; or else immigrants are repatriated to their country of

origin without any concern for their “best interests”.

The condition of child migrants is worsened when their status is not regularized or when they are recruited by criminal organizations. In such cases they are usually sent to detention centres. It is not unusual for them to be arrested, and because they have no money to pay the fine or for the return journey, they can be incarcerated for long periods, exposed to various kinds of abuse and violence. In these instances, the right of states to control migratory movement and to protect the common good of the nation must be seen in conjunction with the duty to resolve and regularize the situation of child migrants, fully respecting their dignity and seeking to meet their needs when they are alone, but also the needs of their parents, for the good of the entire family.

Of fundamental importance is the adoption of adequate national procedures and mutually agreed plans of cooperation between countries of origin and of destination, with the intention of eliminating the causes of the forced emigration of minors.

Thirdly, to all I address a heartfelt appeal that *long-term solutions* be sought and adopted. Since this is a complex phenomenon, the question of child migrants must be tackled at its source. Wars, human rights violations, corruption, poverty, environmental imbalance and disasters, are all causes of this problem. Children are the first to suffer, at times suffering torture and other physical violence, in addition to moral and psychological aggression, which almost always leave indelible scars.

It is absolutely necessary, therefore, to deal with the causes which trigger migrations in the countries of origin. This requires, as a first step, the commitment of the whole international community to eliminate the conflicts and violence that force people to flee. Furthermore, far-sighted perspectives are called for, capable of offering adequate programmes for areas struck by the worst injustice and instability, in order that access to authentic development can be guaranteed for all. This development should promote the good of boys and girls, who are humanity’s hope.

Lastly, I wish to address a word to you, who walk alongside migrant children and young people: they need your precious help. The Church too needs you and supports you in the generous service you offer. Do not tire of courageously

living the Gospel, which calls you to recognize and welcome the Lord Jesus among the smallest and most vulnerable.

I entrust all child migrants, their families, their communities, and you who are close to them, to the protection of the Holy Family of Nazareth; may they watch over and accompany each one on their journey. With my prayers, I gladly impart my Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 8 September 2016

FRANCIS





MESSAGE FROM BISHOP VINCENT LONG VAN NGUYEN OFM CONV.

Bishop Delegate for Migrants and Refugees

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Pope Francis has chosen the theme, “Child Migrants, the Vulnerable and the Voiceless”, for the 103rd World Day of Migrants and Refugees, commemorated in Australia on the last Sunday of August 2017.

Pope Francis reminds us that, “Migration today is not a phenomenon limited to some areas of the planet. It affects all continents and is growing into a tragic situation of global proportions. Not only does this concern those looking for dignified work or better living conditions, but also men and women, the elderly and children, who are forced to leave their homes in the hope of finding safety,

peace and security." (Pope Francis, Message 2017)

The statistics are alarming. UNICEF reported in December 2016 that, "An estimated 535 million children...live in countries affected by conflict or disaster, often without access to medical care, quality education, proper nutrition and protection...". We are no longer able to sit in silence when confronted with these realities. We therefore need to become informed and also become engaged. There are many individuals and organisations who do amazing and inspirational work in this field, who quietly go about their work. We need to join in solidarity with them, and at a grassroots level begin to bring about concrete change.

Whenever we speak about children and child migration, we must always remind ourselves and declare that the best interests of the child must always come first. Where children can flourish the most is first and foremost within their own families. Therefore, when migrant and refugee children come to Australia attention needs to be paid to assisting their parents and helping them to settle and integrate into Australia. By helping families, children will have the best possible chance of succeeding in their new home.

By helping parents provide a safe, communal and positive home environment, this will greatly encourage their children and encourage every chance of success. A close relationship between parents and children is key to aid their settlement and growth as a family and individuals.

Children of Migrant Families

It is important for local communities to help families, particularly the children to integrate into its communities. This is where schools can have a unique role to play. "Childhood, given its fragile nature, has unique and inalienable needs. Above all else, there is the right to a healthy and secure family environment where a child can grow under the guidance and example of a father and a mother; then there is the right and duty to receive adequate education primarily in the family but also in the school where children can grow as persons and agents of their own future and the future of their respective countries." (Pope Francis, Message 2017)

Extra-curricular activities can be great avenues for helping migrant children feel at home, meet new people and settle in more easily into their new community environment. We also need to encourage members of the ethic community who may have arrived earlier to become involved and assist in integrating new families

and children. These 'older generations' have a unique wisdom which can greatly benefit more recent arrivals. By encouraging these members of the community to participate and tapping into their unique wisdom and experience, it allows for greater chances of integrating and succeeding. Pope Francis reminds migrant communities that, "It is necessary, therefore, for immigrants to cooperate ever more closely with the communities that welcome them, for the good of their own children." (Pope Francis, Message 2017)

Education is vital in assisting child migrants and their parents in settling into their new country. More often than not, when English is difficult for parents it's the children who step in to assist in translating and manoeuvring day-to-day situations. Effective education must also look at strengthening young migrants' potential and possibilities by helping them to nurture their talents, developing their personality and using their mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential.

Trafficked Children

Unaccompanied child migrants are an increasing phenomenon within parts of the world due to instability and conflict. These children are particularly vulnerable to extortion, kidnapping, threats, forced labour, and even sexual exploitation. The children, the most vulnerable of the vulnerable, need our urgent attention and protection. Pope Francis reminds us of the stark reality that, "the most powerful force driving the exploitation and abuse of children is demand. If more rigorous and effective action is not taken against those who profit from such abuse, we will not be able to stop the multiple forms of slavery where children are the victims." (Pope Francis, Message 2017)

The key to begin with is to get informed and to get involved. As a church, in collaboration with the local communities, we can bring about concrete change to these situations. Solidarity with children in these situations is very important. We need to become aware of these situations and where possible make others aware as well. By uniting in solidarity with these vulnerable children, as Catholics and along with our Catholic institutions, we can bring about positive and concrete change. There are already many Catholic and community organisations that raise awareness of this issue and provide assistance to children in these situations and this needs to be greatly encouraged and promoted. We also need to work to bring about concrete change in the

countries where migrants leave for a better life. All have a right to live in their own home. Therefore, we must also work to bring about peace and prosperity in nations that are less fortunate than ours. Pope Francis reminds us that, "It is absolutely necessary, therefore, to deal with the causes which trigger migrations in the countries of origin. This requires, as a first step, the commitment of the whole international community to eliminate the conflicts and violence that force people to flee." (Pope Francis, Message 2017)

Conclusion

We need to raise awareness of those issues which face vulnerable, and particularly trafficked children. We cannot remain silent. Raising awareness and as a community bringing about concrete change will help child migrants in all situations grow and flourish. Children also need to be encouraged to grow and to actively participate in the creation of their own future. Whether this be in the school, or through extracurricular or community activities. Finally, fostering positive and nurturing family environments is key to assisting children to settle in their new homes and communities.

"In doing so I ask everyone to take care of the young, who in a threefold way are defenceless: they are children, they are foreigners, and they have no means to protect themselves. I ask everyone to help those who, for various reasons, are forced to live far from their homeland and are separated from their families." (Pope Francis, Message 2017)

Yours in Christ,

Most Rev Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv.



YOUNG MIGRANTS AND OUR COMMUNITIES

by Michelle Pereira
Youth & Education Development Manager
St Vincent de Paul Society, Victoria

"I do not want to live anymore."

The words were written by an 8 year old girl on her notebook and passed to her volunteer tutor during a session.

"I don't want to leave Australia. I love Australia. Australia is good and helpful. I am safe in Australia... In my country they kill kids. In my country they can make me go in an army. In my country I don't know what will happen to me...I will come back to Australia. One day, I will come back. I love Australia..."

This is just one story of a young person whose call for help was amplified by the writing on her notebook and then subsequent conversations. It reflected a lifetime of challenges and a situation that none of us should have to face, let alone the children of our world.

As we take the time to reflect on the issues surrounding child migrants, it makes sense to acknowledge that at the heart of every issue we explore are people; and in this case children.

The plight of the person fleeing their homeland is embedded in our Christian story. The Holy Family's experience of exile and refuge shows us that God's only Son, as an infant, was unsafe. At the heart of Jesus' early childhood, is a story of a family that is forced to leave their home to seek refuge in a foreign land. This gives us an interesting and important context for the exploration of how we respond to young people and their families today who need to do the same.

In Pope Francis' message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees he entrusts the care of children to those who 'walk alongside them' on their journey. Catholic schools and parishes

are full of people who 'walk alongside' the poor, marginalised and those at risk, especially children. Every day we work with young people who have experienced grief, loss, disconnection and varying degrees of trauma. We encounter young people who have seen family members killed in war; who are separated from loved ones, who are struggling to learn new cultures and languages and more. Even in an adult world, these experiences are challenging and often traumatic. But they are not limited to an adult world. They are lived everyday by young people who hold these experiences as part of their identity.

At the heart of our Catholic response is the person. Our call to advocacy and justice for the 'big picture' issue is as important as our call for personal encounter, grassroots responses, and transformational relationships. For some of us, our call takes us to international and national forums for advocacy and impact at the highest level. In parish and school communities we have an opportunity to create targeted approaches to working with young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds in a spirit of inclusion and development. Some of our collective parish responses can include:

Education and Social Inclusion Programs, which promote the social and academic confidence of young people and create opportunities for them to succeed.

Social Advocacy, through impacting social conversation and the narrative that is developed and retold within the community, and which can benefit from a focus on the values of dignity, compassion, respect and justice.

Promotion of child safety and child rights, which foster a culture within our community where children are heard, valued and are part of taking control of their own destiny.

But the call to serve and to 'welcome the stranger' is one that needs to speak to the hearts of every baptised Catholic if we are to truly serve 'for the least of God's people'. There are always things that everyone can do. These include:

Forming relationships which invite people into transformational experiences where individuals are valued and cared for.

Focusing on the positive contribution of migrant young people and their families, by recognising their strength, courage and endurance.

Prioritising cultural competence, which is more than just understanding or tolerance, but an embracing of diversity as part of the rich fabric of our society.

But no exploration that relates to young people is complete without reflection on their views and contributions. Many of us in education and parish settings have had the privilege of hearing the stories of young people who have had to "come across the seas" looking for safety in Australia. We have the chance to hear the voices of vulnerable young people who are often not heard or whose ideas or experiences are minimised. In community settings, young people's contribution to building the consciousness of our society is invaluable.

If we are to respond to the call to 'walk alongside' young people we need to be willing to listen, and to elevate their voices in our community. When we listen to young people, we hear stories of humanity that speak to the core of who we are. Young people speak with honesty and authenticity that can sometimes be lost by an adult perspective.

And what an honour it is to have the chance to personally encounter, 'walk alongside' and hear the stories of these amazing, strong, independent and resilient young people.

And if we ever forget the importance of that encounter, the words below of a parent can help bring us back to hope and optimism. Speaking on behalf of a group of non-English speaking parents, one father said,

Thank you! Thank you! We want to help our children but do not know [how]. We have been praying for people like you to help our children.



ACRATH president Sr Noelene Simmons SM with the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council publication, Human Trafficking and Slavery: A response from Australian Catholics. The paper, written by Noelene and Christine Carolan, ACRATH's Executive Officer, covers forced marriage, supply chains and many other human trafficking issues.

CHILD TRAFFICKING IN OUR REGION

by Rosie Hoban, ACRATH

Human Trafficking – what you can do?

Human trafficking of children in South-East Asia is a major problem that anti-trafficking organisations around the world are working to combat. Children are trafficked into these countries as well as from this region. They are trafficked for many reasons including sexual exploitation, forced labour and child marriage. There are many reasons driving this global phenomenon including poverty, family abuse, tourism and lack of education.

While the trafficking of children into, or from, Australia is not common, Australians have the financial power to help prevent the exploitation of children in other parts of the world. ACRATH (Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans) is one of many non government organisations in Australia working at the policy level to influence supply chains. This means ensuring products coming into Australia are made without the use of slave labour. One of ACRATH's long-term campaigns has been encouraging Australians to buy chocolate, coffee and tea that carry one of three certification labels, ensuring the product has not been produced using forced labour.

Australians spent about $2 billion on chocolate over Easter and much of it was produced using the worst forms of child labour in West Africa. These children pick cocoa beans – a key ingredient used to make chocolate. Many of these children are forced to do this work. The International Labor Rights Forum (ILRF) estimates that there are 1.5 million children working in the cocoa sector in West Africa. Another important focus for ACRATH is forced marriage of children, which is happening in Australia today. In May 2017 the Australian Federal Police were quoted in the media as saying that allegations of forced marriage have increased more than 600% since

it was criminalised in 2013.

In 2015 ACRATH developed a forced marriage kit, which was first piloted in nine schools in three states. The kit was refined and is now being used in a number of schools across Australia. ACRATH's kit, My Rights – My Future: forced marriage, includes curriculum resources and school support documents. A Professional Learning Package, for all Government, Catholic and Independent secondary schools across Australia has also been developed by ACRATH. The kit is now available on Anti-Slavery Australia's mybluesky website and many schools have accessed the resources. ACRATH also runs training sessions for teachers, school counsellors and frontline responders across Australia who want help in identifying and supporting young people, mostly girls, who have been, or who are at risk of being, forced to marry.

ACRATH works closely with other NGOs and community organisations to combat forced marriage. We also work with neighbouring countries including Indonesia, to better understand the familial, cultural and religious reasons driving forced marriage and to gain a better understanding of how to work more closely with religious leaders and their communities to combat the problems.

For more information, or to find out how the forced marriage program could run in your school, contact: ACRATH Community Development Worker, Liz Payne, on 0400 627 060 or visit the mybluesky website at, mybluesky.org.au.

acrath.org.au



From left to right: Isaiah Lahai, Reza Shaams, Danielle Sherry, Jefry Yikwa and Paulie Stewart

REFUGEE VOICE OF HOPE AND RESILIENCE

by Danielle Sherry

The greatest thing in the world for social justice advocate and former refugee Isaiah Lahai is not prosperity. It is legacy.

"No matter how prosperous one is, when you die, you will only be remembered for a little while. Thereafter, people will forget about you. But when you sow a seed into someone's life, that seed will live forever," he said.

Isaiah works tirelessly in his community by using his personal refugee story to educate and encourage discussion and reflection. He works with Jesuit Social Services visiting schools, parishes and the wider community for their 'Just Voices' Speakers Program.

"On the 23rd of March 1991, a violent civil war reached my door step in Buedu Town, Republic of Sierra Leone. Close family members were killed, carnage and anarchy was everywhere. Nowhere was safe. Everyone was fleeing for their lives" he said.

In the chaos and terror of escaping, Isaiah was separated from his parents. “I walked for three days and three nights to reach safety in neighbouring Guinea. Mercifully, I was reunited with them.

“Everything around me was a failure. I searched for hope, but hope was nowhere to be found,” he said as he described the 14 horrifying years, ordered from one refugee camp to another.

Sadly Isaiah’s refugee journey is not unique, but his willingness and determination to be a voice for refugee rights and justice is powerful.

Since arriving in Australia in 2006, Isaiah said his desire is to be a legacy driven citizen and contributor to Australian society. “I came to realise that Australians are willing to walk with you, in your shoes, if you share your story with them,” he said.

In telling his personal story, Isaiah incorporates powerful messages of resilience and hope. Grade 6 classroom teacher, Jo Howell, St Finbar’s Primary Brighton East, wrote:

“Our students were amazed at Isaiah’s story, and the resilience and determination he showed to overcome the cruelty and heartache he suffered. He inspired all of us with his incredible courage and his desire to help others. Even now the students are still talking about him and we often pray for him in our daily prayers.”

Along with Isaiah, Jesuit Social Services has a number of social justice speakers from diverse backgrounds, communities and cultures willing to share their personal experiences and messages with workplaces, schools and parishes. If you would like more information, please download their brochure or contact: danielle.sherry@jss.org.au or paul.stewart@jss.org.au



Fr Roger Manalo - Scalabrinian Missionary, Parish Priest of Mater Christi parish and Chaplain to the Filipino Community in the Archdiocese of Adelaide (SA). He is currently the Interim National Director of the Australian Apostleship of the Sea.

HOMILY REFLECTION FOR MIGRANT AND REFUGEE SUNDAY

by Fr Roger Manalo CS

Today, the Catholic Church in Australia observes Migrant and Refugee Sunday.

The Church in Australia is the Church of migrant Catholics from many countries and where the Holy Mass is celebrated in more than thirty languages every Sunday.

Migrants leave their homes in search of a better life and face the difficult experience of migration in its various forms.

The theme chosen by Pope Francis for this year's World Day of Migrants and Refugees is "Child Migrants, the vulnerable and voiceless." As Christians, we are called to reach out to and pray for all migrants to emphasise the unity of the human family and the Gospel values of acceptance, hospitality and love of neighbour.

This celebration of the Holy Eucharist wishes to be a specific sign of the multi-ethnicity of the Australian continent, or better of its intercultural journey, which means a dialogue among cultures, more so than a simple tolerated coexistence. It is an exchange that enriches everyone, because at the

centre is Jesus Christ who asks us to say who he is.

I would like to recall the powerful question at the heart of today's Gospel, in order to reflect more in depth about our search for Jesus Christ and the communion among us.

Jesus asked: *"who do you say I am?"* Simon spoke up, *"You are the Christ."* I imagine how Jesus was truly delighted with the insight of Simon and because of that, he changed the name of Simon into Peter. Somehow, this marks the beginning of a new identity for the old Simon which then will call him to a new mission.

"Who do you say I am?" is a question that all of us should answer as well. To answer who Jesus is for me, I decided to answer it in three parts of my life.

The first part has something to do with my PAST. Do I entrust Jesus my past, my brokenness, sins, hurts, guilt, regrets? Simon Peter gave an impressive answer "you are the Christ" but he only realised its true meaning after he looked at the hindsight with his relationship with Jesus after the resurrection. It was only when I allowed Jesus to heal all my past hurts and failures, let Him wash my sins and pride away and allowed Him to change me that I had fully recognised that He is the Christ of my life as Simon allowed himself to be called Peter by the Lord, thus, fulfilling God's plan.

We see this pattern also with the Old Testament figures Abram and Sarai who took the challenge to migrate and to be called Abraham and Sarah, their offspring Jacob to be named Israel that led to the Jewish people to call themselves Israel. The fulfillment of God's promise and plan entails a journey of faith and purification, which demands leaving behind all the comforts and certainties of the "contingent homeland". From a theological perspective, more than a migration, the pilgrimage of Abraham represents the beginning of the return, aiming at discovering his real identity and his mission.

The second part is the FUTURE. Simon Peter and the other disciples surely have future plans for themselves, but when they met "the Christ" they let Him lead them. If Jesus holds the future, I have no reasons to fear the future. I tried to live my life one day at a time. I let the Lord lead me and let Him take me where He wants. Talking to many migrants from Europe and Asia who were looking for greener pastures, this is exactly what they did, they entrusted the future to the Lord and boarded a plane or a ship. If they allow fears of the unknown future to stop them, they are not able to set foot in Australia. If

Moses allowed the discouragement of the unknown future in the desert then Israel should not have the possession of the Promised Land. If I cannot leave my future in total abandonment to Him, then he is not "the Christ" of my life.

In the New Testament, itinerancy strongly characterises the first evangelisation. The announcement of the Good News should be spread "to the ends of the earth" and the missionaries are requested to leave their homes and preach in other towns and villages. The 12 Apostles first (Lk 9,1-6), and the 72 disciples later (Lk 10,1-12) are "sent out" as migrants, putting their trust only in God. The last dispatch happens just before Jesus' ascension into Heaven; this time the destination is the remote corners of the world, with the aim of converting all the peoples.

The other part is NOW. The Christ is a God of now. He is here with me every minute of the day. He is with me in all my endeavours and undertakings. I derive my ministry from Him but at the same time as I participate in the ministry of His church, I am also taking part of His identity. God is a God of now and I let Him be. As he called Simon, Peter - the ROCK, I am secured in His love. Abraham and Moses were able to accomplish the tasks given to them because they trusted God and many migrants were able to rebuild their lives here in Australia because of their faith and trust in God and they believe that God is always with them all the time.

Surely, God reveals himself in his fullness in Jesus of Nazareth, when for instance, as we have just heard in the Gospel of today's Liturgy, Jesus encounters Simon to transform him into a disciple: *"who do you say I am?"* and reveals himself to his listeners by suggesting an encounter face to face and saying: *"blessed are you".* In another account, we find similar words of Jesus inviting to an intense relationship with him: *"I am the light of the world"* (Jn 8:12); *"I am the gate of the sheep"* (Jn 10:7); *"I am the shepherd, the good one"* (Jn 10:11). Thus, God's presence, in Jesus Christ, sheds light on the foundation on which also every apostolate is built, which means paying more attention to the specific interpersonal relationships.

Jesus ordered His disciples not to tell people about the profession of Simon Peter. I believe that we are not to talk about Jesus as Christ but to declare it in our way of life.

In the context of human mobility, this means that the relationship among people has a very important value: it affirms one's own identity and transforms an encounter into

a mission of respect, of promotion, of the importance of interpersonal relationship.

First, we should allow Him to touch and heal our PAST to be able to recognise who He really is.

Second, we must allow Him to direct our FUTURE transforming it into a mission of the encounter.

Lastly: to let Him be our NOW. Then we can do more by forgiving others, encouraging the hopeless and the helpless, reaching out to those in need, standing for those who cannot defend themselves, be the voice of the voiceless, speaking against the unjust system that displaces people, denouncing the silence that allows the trafficking of human being specially women and children, condemning the acts of war and terrorism, welcoming the strangers and opening our home for those who have nowhere to lay their heads.

Today's Gospel teaches us that at the heart of the mission there must be an inter-personal relationship. This is most true for the mission to migrants, refugees and people who are on the move for many different reasons.

Our parish communities have the responsibility to find migrants and refugees, especially the young migrants and to reach out to them to build inter personal relationships. We need to offer places and opportunities where the migrant youth can express their faith and to share their experience. Very many of the youth in our parishes come from important experiences of faith and involvement in the Church back home and some have suffered a great deal for the sake of their faith.

The question: *"who do you say I am"* challenges us: as Christians, we are called to create inter personal relationships that, by promoting every human person, can bring all to the encounter with Christ recognised as *"the Son of God".*

The pastoral document *Welcoming Christ in Refugees and Forcibly Displaced Persons* helps us to build the depth of this inter personal relationship: *In the "strangers" the Church sees Christ who "pitches his tent among us" and that "knocks at our door"* [n. 22]. It also points out that very often, "*through the action inspired by the Gospel of Church-related agencies, or even individuals, wrought with great generosity and self-sacrifice, one comes to know the love of Christ and the transforming power of His grace in these situations that are, in themselves, very often hopeless"* [n. 3].

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ELSPM
English Language School for Pastoral Ministry



SUGGESTED PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

We now present our petitions to the Father of all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

For the Church. In a world of constant conflict, may she be a beacon of light and stability, and a sacrament of communion for all people.

We pray to the Lord.

For the Holy Father Pope Francis. For continued strength and wisdom in listening to the Holy Spirit. May we, by his guidance, be renewed to strengthen our work with the voiceless and marginalised.

We pray to the Lord.

For the leaders of our nations. That they may actively promote justice and peace among all nations, in particular to those least among us.

We pray to the Lord.

For child migrants and unaccompanied refugee children who are forced to leave their homes. May they find a new safe home and a brighter future. May we continue to become aware of their situation and bring about positive change in their lives.

We pray to the Lord.

For migrants who call Australia home. May Australia, which is continually blessed and enriched with the diversity which migrants bring, become a home for migrants and their families. Also, for the families of migrants left behind, may we be attentive to their needs.

We pray to the Lord.

For those providing safety and support to migrants. That the Lord continue to bless their work and ministries, raising awareness and helping migrants and refugees in our communities.

We pray to the Lord.

For the deceased. In particular those searching for a better home. May the consoling heart of Jesus grant them eternal rest.

We pray to the Lord.

Lord Jesus, we praise you and we give you thanks. You call us to welcome your children who come to our land to better their lives and to escape oppression, poverty, persecution, violence, and war. Grant that we may be guided by your Word to abolish the barriers in our hearts and in our minds.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Catholic Organisations

National

Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office
National Director: Fr Maurizio Pettená CS
GPO Box 2720, Canberra ACT 2601
Tel: (02) 6201 9848
Fax: (02) 9012 0866
Email: info@acmro.catholic.org.au

Local

Adelaide

Multicultural Office Archdiocese of Adelaide
Manager: Sr Nien Tran RSM
Catholic Diocesan Centre
39 Wakefield Street, Adelaide SA 5000
Tel: (08) 8210 9358
Fax: (08) 8223 3880
Email: ntran@adelaide.catholic.org.au

Brisbane

Centre for Multicultural Pastoral Care
Director: Clyde Cosentino
GPO Box 282, Brisbane Qld 4001
Tel: (07) 3324 3447
Email: cmpc@bne.catholic.net.au
Web: www.multiculturalcare.org.au

Melbourne

Melbourne Catholic Migrant & Refugee Office
Episcopal Vicar for Migration:
Fr Ciril Bozic OFM
Executive Officer: Brenda Hubber
PO Box 146, East Melbourne Vic 8002
Tel: (03) 9926 5720
Fax: (03) 9926 5617
Email: mcmro@cam.org.au

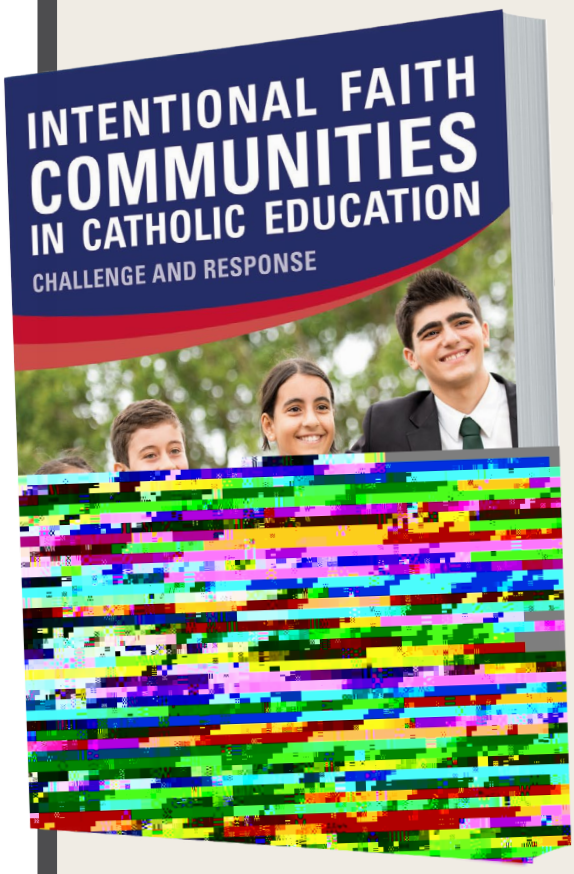
Perth

West Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office
PO Box 3311, East Perth WA 6892
Tel: (08) 9223 1351
Email: enquiries@perthcatholic.org.au

Sydney

Catholic Immigration Office
Episcopal Vicar for Migration:
Fr Isidore Anantharaj
Executive Director: Kylie Cullen
Level 16, Polding Centre, 133
Liverpool Street, Sydney NSW 2000
Tel: (02) 9390 5923
Fax: (02) 9264 5093
Email: immigration@sydneycatholic.org

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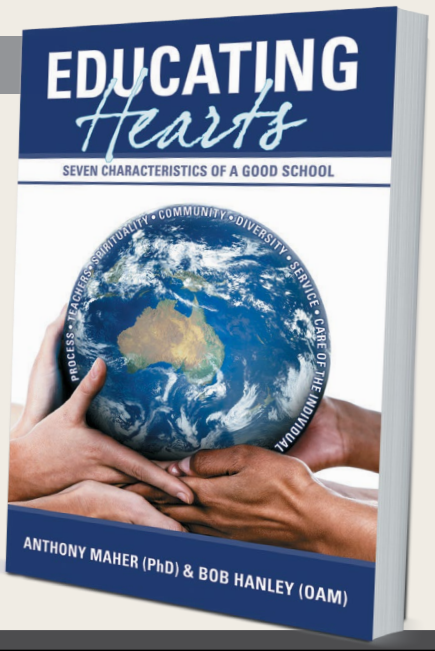
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JUST VOICES SPEAKERS PROGRAM



Jefry, Just Voices Speaker

Would you like the chance to gain deeper insight, empathy and understanding into another person's journey by listening to their story?

At Jesuit Social Services, we have the privilege of walking beside many people, through the ordinary and sometimes extraordinary stages of their lives.

You can now hear their stories in person through our Just Voices Speakers Program.

Our speakers share their stories to open ears across Australia – in classrooms and workplaces, to community and church groups, and even at public events and festivals.

GET TO KNOW A LIFE STORY UNLIKE YOURS

Our speakers are social justice advocates who come from diverse backgrounds, communities and cultures.

They'll share with you their personal experiences of:

- seeking asylum and refugee settlement in Australia
- First Nations culture, including dance, didgeridoo and painting
- East Timorese history and culture
- global health issues

... and much more.

Our speakers open up conversation and reflection by giving voice to the struggles, challenges and joys happening all around us.

With courage and resilience they share their truth, and demonstrate the great humanity within us all.

Jesuit
Social Services
Building a Just Society

EVERY PRESENTATION IS UNIQUE

Our speakers tailor their presentations to their lived experience, and to what you and fellow audience members would like to hear about.

Common themes include resilience, courage, empathy, leadership, empowerment, social justice, diversity and cultural awareness.

And just like our speakers, every presentation is different. Some presentations involve music and poetry. All involve both a personal story and a call to action for each member of the audience to contemplate.

Our speakers can also build in optional activities, like:

- small group activities
- workshops
- live music performances
- additional reading and research.

For schools, Just Voices speakers offer empowering sessions to inspire students to develop social justice messages. All presentations for schools link to the Australian and Victorian curriculum.

FOR AUDIENCES BIG OR SMALL

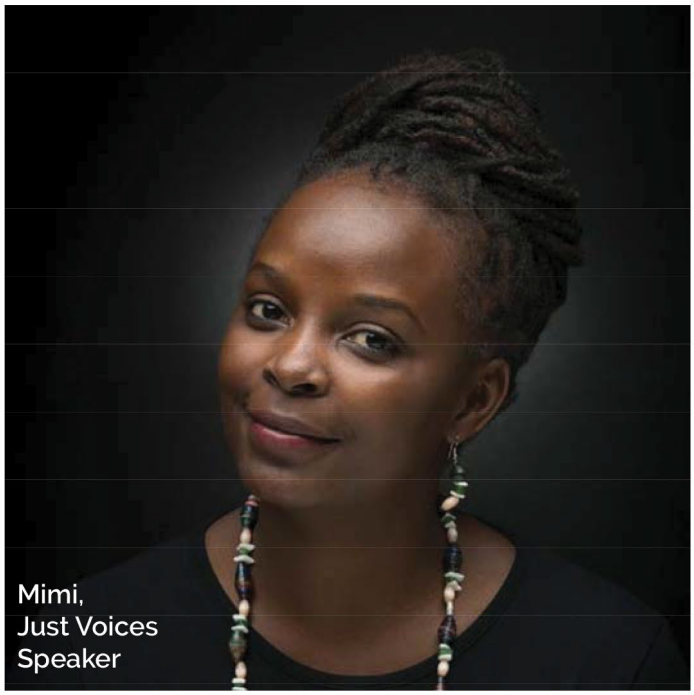
Our speakers present to a range of groups, including:

- primary and secondary schools
- higher education students
- community groups
- parishes and church groups
- workplaces
- private functions
- festivals and other public events.

PRICING

Just Voices is a fee for service activity. We pay all our speakers for their time and provide them with ongoing support, mentorship and debriefing opportunities.

Please contact us to discuss pricing, how you can sponsor an event, or how to donate to the program.



Mimi,
Just Voices
Speaker

TESTIMONIALS

"The teachers said it was the best assembly they'd been to in eight years!! The students, as you could see, loved it. We will definitely look forward to working with you again."

Kate, Personal Development Coordinator,
De La Salle College

"Their stories were remarkable – not quite the lives that our students are used to."

Louise, Senior Teaching & Learning Leader,
Monbulk College

"The response from our team has been significant. Although the personal stories were unthinkable, they were equally inspiring. Your speakers started a conversation, which I hope will continue for some time."

Martin Reynolds,
Head of Institutional & Middle Markets Victoria, JLL

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Jesuit
Social Services
Building a Just Society

Jesuit Social Services is a social change organisation working to build a just society where all people can live to their full potential. This program is funded by a donor from the Australian Communities Foundation and City of Yarra's Investing in Community grants. Visit us online at www.jss.org.au to discover more.



Produced By:
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Australian Catholic Bishops Conference
Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office
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