



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

General Secretariat

Bishops Commission for Evangelisation, Laity and Ministry

Reflection on Pope Leo XIV message - 112th World Day of Migrants and Refugees

27th September 2026

“Even Just One of These Children” (cf. Mt 18:10)

Dear Friends in Christ,

This year we celebrate the 112th World Day of Migrants and Refugees on the 27th of September 2026.

The theme focuses on children who are involved in Global movements of migration.

We can often neglect this important area. We frequently find the articulations of adults who are Migrants and Refugees and their plight. We tend to forget the children involved. We see on the television and in social media the unspoken presence of young children gathering around their parents but saying nothing. Their faces often look blank and traumatised. This is what the Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, is asking us to reflect on this year.

Indeed, it is the Pope's message which declares, “Minors are the most vulnerable group within the global movements of migration. They are concrete faces, who have unique stories, and call on our conscience.”

The Pope then makes the acute observation, “Yet, amid so much darkness, the light of solidarity is not lacking. Individuals, families, civil institutions and ecclesial communities choose not to pass by on the other side.” He then mentions families who open their doors and enable children in this situation to be accommodated and educated, particularly in reception centres. The Pope also lauds the efforts of volunteers and aid workers “who each day devote themselves to healing the invisible wounds of these little ones along migration routes and in our cities.”

We would all agree with the Pope that “sadly, migrant children are more easily ignored, because they lack adults capable of protecting and supporting them.” Our responsibility in our community and in Australia in general, is to go out of our way to be attentive to this often invisible and voiceless dimension of Migrants and Refugees.

The Pope, towards the end of his message, notes the interreligious dimension of our care for Migrant and Refugee children.

He notes, "the vulnerability of the young knows no religious boundaries and unites us in a shared humanitarian and spiritual responsibility. This becomes fertile ground for a concrete interreligious dialogue."

So let us read carefully this significant message from the Pope and pray, in our Mass and Prayers of the Faithful, for children caught up in the great waves of migration in today's chaotic world.

Archbishop Christopher Prowse

Bishop-Delegate for Migrant and Refugees

Chair, Bishops Commission for Evangelisation, Laity and Ministry