

1996

Message

**Immigration Sunday
August 18th, 1996**

*Sr. Julianne Dunn, Acting Director
Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office
Bishops Committee for Migrants and Refugees*

1 July 1996

Dear Father,

[2932]

I wish to draw your attention to Immigration Sunday which will be held in most dioceses this year on Sunday, August 25.

A copy of the Pope's Statement entitled "In the Church no-one is a stranger" is enclosed, for your information. It is timely for us to reflect on the Pope's message:

[2933]

"The Church is the place where asylum seekers are also recognized and accepted as brothers and sisters. It is the task of the various dioceses, actively to ensure that these people, who are obliged to live outside the safety net of civil society, may find a sense of brotherhood and sisterhood in the Christian community...."

'I was a stranger and you welcomed me' ... Today the asylum seeker comes before us like that stranger' in whom Jesus asks to be recognized. To welcome and to show solidarity is a duty of hospitality and fidelity to Christian identity itself."

Today, attitudes need to be changed and the role of the churches is to help change attitudes. We need to begin with ourselves. Reflecting on immigration in Australia today and the role of the churches, reminds me of some wise words expressed by The Hon. Justice Marcus Einfeld at an Immigration Summit at Parliament House during Refugee Week. He said that when he reads or looks at TV news of refugees around the troubled part of the globe, he thinks of his grand-parents who came from Europe and settled in Australia. He said "They could have gone to any other part of the world which has a refugee crisis today, and I think to myself There, but for the grace of God, go I' - and my family and loved ones".

[2934]

The following BASIC NEEDS OF REFUGEES were enunciated recently during a talk by Quentin Dignum, S.J. at the Second Consultation for the Pastoral Care of Migrants in Asia", Manila, May, 1996:

[2935]

'What refugees need is what I need and what you need:

safety, food, shelter;

education, employment, health care;

love, family, respect, friendship, fair dealing;

opportunities to express my faith and use my gifts,

to make decisions about my life, to plan and build a future in my own country or a new country,

to grieve and to laugh. We are not different. '

To help celebrate Immigration Sunday, we encourage you to-

[2936]

Help change attitudes:

** prepare for it by asking some thought-provoking or open-ended questions and printing them in your parish bulletin?*

** ask some of your refugee or migrant groups to take part in the liturgy in the Readings, in the Offertory Procession,*

** insert some special petitions in the Universal Prayer,*

** have a hospitality function after Mass and have some groups prepare some multicultural food,*

** have a concert with various national dances.... anything that helps to make people BELONG.*

We look forward to hearing how you are able to celebrate this day.

With kindest regards and best wishes,

Sincerely, in Christ,

Sr. Julianne Dunn

Acting Director

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