

150 DAYS OF ACTION FOR REFUGEES & ASYLUM SEEKERS



The Holy Father, Pope Francis, has declared 2021 to be the year of St. Joseph, who was himself a refugee and along with Mother Mary the guardians of Jesus as a refugee child. This year is an opportunity for all of us to celebrate and reflect on St. Joseph, described by Pope Francis in his apostolic letter which instituted the year, *Patris corde* (“With a Father’s Heart”), as a beloved father, a father who is creatively courageous, a father in the shadows.

In this letter, Pope Francis specifically names St. Joseph as “the special patron of all those forced to leave their native lands because of war, hatred, persecution and poverty.” Since then, Pope Francis has also added to St. Joseph’s titles that of “Patron of Refugees”.

The timing of such a declaration is critical because, after two decades, it is clear that Australia’s treatment of those who come to us seeking protection needs to change. For the past twenty years, refugees and people seeking asylum in Australia have experienced inhumane and cruel treatment.

We need to re-imagine what it would be like to come to a place like Australia and find the way to safety barred – to find a toxic political atmosphere that describes our children, our mums and dads as “illegals” and “queue-jumpers” as those trying to manipulate the charity of Australia. Australia needs a new heart, a new way to and show mercy. We think there is an opportunity to engage across all our communities, religious, schools, parishes and workplaces to become active in a new way to advocate with those who come seeking our protection.

To honour and acknowledge this special time in the year of St. Joseph and his role as the Patron of Refugees, a coalition, led by the Sisters of St. Joseph and the Justice and Peace Office of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney, has come together to initiate 150 days of action across Australia, to engage with people of good will, and advocate to change our country’s attitude and policies towards those seeking protection in Australia. As part of the campaign and in the name of St. Joseph the Refugee, we robustly exhort the Federal Government to:

1. To provide income support and a financial safety net for all people seeking asylum in Australia
2. To end temporary protection visas and create a clear pathway to permanent residency
3. To ensure access to family reunion for refugees and people seeking asylum in Australia

This campaign began on 1 May 2021, the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker and will conclude with a Day of Lamentation and Call on Sunday 26th September 2021, the World Day of Migrants and Refugees.

Source: Sydney Archdiocese Justice and Peace Office

Bulletin Notice

The Gospel tells us that Joseph, Mary and Jesus fled from their homeland for safety. Pope Francis has recently named St Joseph as “the special patron of all those forced to leave their native lands because of war, hatred, persecution and poverty.”

To honour and acknowledge this, people are coming together to engage in **150 Days of Action** across Australia, concluding on September 26th. We wish to work with people of good will, and together advocate to change our country’s attitude and policies towards those seeking protection in Australia. The Australian response needs to reflect the Gospel more, as it too often presents refugees and people seeking asylum as those who try to manipulate our charity. Jesus says to us that what we do to others we do to him.

All parishes and groups, no matter how small, are invited to take part, and to work with others for the good of our brothers and sisters who are seeking refuge.

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