

Migrant and Refugee Week 24 - 30 August

“St Paul, Migrant, Apostle of the peoples”

What is the experience of immigrants within the Australian cultural diversity as builders of unity in the Church?

All baptized in Christ, you have all clothed yourself in Christ, and there are no more distinctions between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female, but all of you are one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28)

It is a fact that our Catholic dioceses, parishes, schools, and organisations are becoming increasingly diverse. Some may feel excited about this whilst others may struggle with all this diversity. From a pastoral point of view, one cannot avoid but ask the question: *“how do we welcome all of this diversity in our midst so to grow even stronger as one and avoid the risk of becoming fragmented and each going its way?”*

During Migrant and Refugee Week we reflect as a community and find ways to be on the look for newly arrived migrants in our communities and make sure they will feel welcome and simply at home. In Australia, we are blessed, because of the presence of many clergy, religious brothers and sisters, pastoral associates and volunteers who themselves come from various countries and culture enabling them to respond effectively to an otherwise little understood culture.

The Catholic Church in Australia has benefited in many ways by migration “in Australia we have come to experience through migration that geographical barriers between people can disappear, and those who were geographically, culturally, politically, religiously far apart from each other can now come to live together and to know each other better. This helps gradually to erode prejudice and historical rivalries built over many centuries.” We recognize how migrants have enriched the community through increased membership, active practice, symbols, practices and devotions, a sense of openness, and inclusiveness of many people and cultures. Without understating the difficulties and dangers of migration the Church continues to play an important part in the migration programme through the provision of pastoral care and through sponsorship and resettlement programmes.

Father of goodness, we give thanks for the universality of the Church and we ask you to help us to be able to welcome one another with a love that breaks boundaries and build your Kingdom. Amen.

Source: A resource kit is available at www.catholic.org.au