



*Blessed are those who look into the eyes of the abandoned and marginalised and show them their closeness*

## A CHRISTIAN'S IDENTITY CARD

In Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation on the call to holiness, *Rejoice and Be Glad*, chapter three is an exploration of Matthew's Beatitudes.

*Jesus explains with great simplicity what it means to be holy when he gave us the Beatitudes. The Beatitudes are like a Christian's identity card. ... In the Beatitudes, we find a portrait of the Master, which we are called to reflect in our daily lives. n 63*

Pope Francis also acknowledges that the Beatitudes are not intended to be poetic, comforting statements but are in the 21st century counter cultural to 'the way things are usually done in our world. We can only practise them if the Holy Spirit fills us with his power and frees us from our weakness, our selfishness, our complacency ... n 65

## SIX NEW BEATITUDES

During a Mass in Sweden for All Saints Day, Pope Francis offered six new Beatitudes 'to confront the troubles and anxieties of our age with the spirit and love of Jesus.

**Blessed are those who remain faithful while enduring evils inflicted on them by others and forgive them from their heart.**

**Blessed are those who look into the eyes of the abandoned and marginalised and show them their closeness.**

**Blessed are those who see God in every person and strive to make others also discover God.**

**Blessed are those who protect and care for our common home.**

**Blessed are those who renounce their own comfort in order to help others.**

**Blessed are those who pray and work for full communion between Christians.**

## AFGHANISTAN HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

It is now just over six months since the fall of Kabul to the Taliban. Last year many groups across Australia came together to organise national campaigns for individuals and groups to meet with their local MPs to request compassionate government assistance and increased immigration numbers of Afghan people to Australia; to at least 20,000. *Christians United for Afghanistan* is just one example of a coalition of churches and businesses requesting increased government assistance

[www.unitedforafghanistan.com](http://www.unitedforafghanistan.com)

## CATHOLIC BISHOPS ASK FOR A GENEROUS RESPONSE

In the last week of January this year, the Federal Government announced 15,000 places over four years for people fleeing Afghanistan. As Bishop Vincent Long, chair of the Bishops Commission for Social Justice, Mission and Service commented: *"this sounds good, but the problem is that these are places within the existing humanitarian and family visa programs."*

This year, our Bishops have repeated their call for the urgent creation of at least 20,000 additional places in Australia's annual humanitarian intake of 13,750.

The Catholic Alliance for People Seeking Asylum (CAPSA) [www.capsa.org.au](http://www.capsa.org.au), (co-convened by Jesuit Social Services and Jesuit Refugee Service) and many other community groups will work with the Bishops. The CAPSA website offers ways to be involved.

## WAR IS A FAILURE OF POLITICS AND HUMANITY

In *Fratelli tutti*, Pope Francis writes:

Every war leaves our world worse than it was before. War is a failure of politics and of humanity, a shameful capitulation, a stinging defeat before the forces of evil. Let us not remain mired in theoretical discussions, but touch the wounded flesh of the victims ... Let us hear the true stories of these victims of violence, look at reality through their eyes, and listen with an open heart to the stories they tell. n 261

## MANDATORY DETENTION OF REFUGEES

Recent publicity surrounding the detention of an international tennis player also focused global attention on the detention of refugees in a Melbourne hotel. They were brought there from offshore detention or from PNG for medical treatment, which in many instances has not been received. Some have been in detention for 9 years. The government will not allow them to settle in Australia because they arrived here by boat.

*Australia's response to asylum seekers and refugees has been marked by vitriolic political debate at every federal election campaign since 2001. As ever tougher deterrence measures have been introduced, our nation has retreated from its obligation to protect the fundamental right of those in fear of their lives to seek asylum. Australia is forgetting its proud tradition of welcoming the stranger. As a nation, we are at risk of becoming indifferent.*

Australian Catholic Bishops  
Social Justice Statement 2015-2016

## From Najeeba's story (Amnesty International)

"Leaving your country for good is one of the hardest decisions a person can be forced to make. It means a break with all you know ...

Asylum seekers carry sorrow and distress and depend on human sympathy. An asylum seeker is a kneeling person; kneeling in front of the ship to ask for a reduced escape price; kneeling in front of the aid agency asking to be saved.

They get on a boat, on a piece of wood, not knowing where it is taking them; their safety and security limited to that piece of wood, risking starving or drowning at sea."

## An Iraqi asylum seeker detained on Manus

"I am here, an unknown person. No one knows about us. We are on this island. We thank them for what they are providing for us, these services, everything we need that they are providing for us. We just need to have some certainty. I have lived in war zones, with bombs and explosions. I have never experienced what I am experiencing here with the uncertainty we face. If we had died in the ocean, that would have been better, I just need to know my destiny so that I can sleep at night. Just to know, so that I can be prepared for what will happen."

DATE CLAIMER FOR

**PALM SUNDAY RALLY  
FOR REFUGEES**

10 April 2 - 4pm  
Belmore Park opposite Central Station