



Vox Populi

21 September 2022

Since 1914, the Catholic Church has celebrated the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, expressing concern for different vulnerable people on the move and raising awareness about the opportunities offered by migration.

This Sunday, September 25, we will gather with the rest of the faithful around the world to commemorate the wonderful contribution migrants and refugees have made to the life of both our Church and nation.

In May, His Holiness Pope Francis stressed the importance of building the future with migrants and refugees, recognising how each of them can contribute to the process of construction.

“As we have seen, the arrival of Catholic migrants and refugees can energise the ecclesial life of the communities that welcome them,” he said.

“Often, they bring an enthusiasm that can revitalise our communities and enliven our celebrations. Sharing different expressions of faith and devotions offers us a privileged opportunity for experiencing more fully the catholicity of the People of God.”

In the context of our Australian Catholic faith, we recognise the immense importance migrants and refugees have made to building and revitalising our Church throughout its history.

The migration of Irish Catholic priests to the penal settlements in the early 1800s allowed the Church to gain a foothold in the fledging colony, providing Catholic convicts with an alternative to the Church of England services they had previously been compelled to attend.

A steady wave of migration of priests, religious and lay people through the 19th century from other parts of Europe allowed the Church to flourish across the continent.

The post-Second World War migration of Italians, Maltese, Lebanese, Dutch, German, Polish, Croatian and Hungarian Catholics helped to build up the Catholic Church in Australia to what it is today, the largest Christian denomination in Australia.

More recently, migrants from the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and South America have added to the life of the Church, creating wonderful diversity in our pews, pulpits, and religious orders.

With many parts of the world still at war, we know there will continue to be waves of migrants and refugees entering the difficult journey towards a better life.

As Pope Francis said, the presence of migrants and refugees represents a great challenge, but also an immense opportunity for the cultural and spiritual growth of everyone.

We pray that migrants and refugees will continue to be a source of enrichment for our Church, for our nation and for our Diocese, bringing their unique culture and gifts, and energising the ecclesial life of our faith community.

We also pray for those currently on the difficult journey, that they might find safety, refuge, and comfort, and that the Church will open her arms to support and welcome them, following in the example of Jesus Christ.

Most Rev Bishop Anthony Randazzo will celebrate Mass at Our Lady of the Rosary Cathedral on Sunday at 9:30am for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees. All are invited to attend.