

REFUGEE AND MIGRANT SUNDAY 28 AUGUST 2011

Liturgy Notes

For use on or around 28 August 2011

Refugee and Migrant Sunday is a celebration of the dignity of people who are refugees and migrants and the contribution they have made to life in Australia. It is celebrated by the Churches together on or around the last Sunday of August each year.

Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Romans 12:13-15

Preparation

Feel free to adapt these notes to suit your congregation/community as you seek to invite and involve people of different ages, gender and ethnicity.

In many parishes a number of languages are spoken. Some of these could be incorporated into the liturgy, always respecting its structure and balance. A reading could be done in another language, and the English translation included in the bulletin or electronically. Some of the Intercessions could be translated into another language. Appropriate hymns in other languages could be sung.

The Church could be decorated with flags; there could be a large globe in front of the altar and/or a map of the world on a wall.

Entrance Procession - The procession could include people of different nationalities in national dress, bringing flags and cultural symbols (Don't forget the Australian and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island flags).

Welcome - Today is the day the Church across Australia prays together for refugees and migrants in our country. Some of us may be refugees and migrants, and certainly most of us are the descendants of refugees or migrants. Australia is a special place. Our population has a rich cultural mix, thanks to the refugees and migrants who have made this country their home over the years. Today, let us celebrate the richness of our nation, with its population drawn from various countries, races, cultures, religions and life experiences. Let us pray that we can contribute to this place as a sacred space. Let us resolve to be inclusive, to welcome the stranger, and to create a harmonious and multicultural nation that offers freedom, peace, democracy, acceptance and opportunity to all.

Gathering Rite and Opening Prayer

Leader: With respect and gratitude for the original custodians of this land, we gather together today to affirm in hope and faith that we can create a sacred space in which we give thanks to God for all who live in Australia.

Let us pray:

God, You are the source of human dignity, and it is in your image that we are created. Pour out on us the Spirit of love and compassion.

Enable us to reverence each person, to reach out to those in need, to value and appreciate those who differ from us, to share the resources of our nation, to receive the gifts offered to us by people from other cultures.

Grant us the voice and courage to speak out against injustice, stand up for the oppressed, and embrace the marginalized. Help us to remember that we are all one in the Body of Christ.

Amen

Penitential Prayer:

God, you call us to be in relationship, building community with one another, working with one another, supporting and healing one another, but often we have turned our back on our neighbour when they have been in need.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

God, you call us into a community working for the common good of all people, making choices that bring hope, justice, truth and freedom to our world, yet sometimes we have failed to speak out against injustice and lift up the oppressed

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

God, you call us into community with the whole of creation, always cherishing, nurturing and renewing the earth. But we have taken what you have given and not fully shared it with those around us.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Absolution

God through his forgiveness draws you closer to him and, in him, closer to one another.

Amen

Liturgy of the Word:

Readings

1. Australian Lectionary: Exodus 3:1-15 or Jeremiah 15:15-21; Psalm 105:1-6, 23-26, 45c or Psalm 26:1-8; Romans 12:9-21; Matthew 16:21-28

2. Roman Catholic Lectionary: Jeremiah 20:7-9; Psalm 63:2-9; Romans 12:1-2; Matthew 16:21-27

Sermon / Homily Notes:

It is worth reflecting on and praying with the Readings today as we mark Refugee and Migrant Sunday.

They invite us into a counter-cultural way of being human. While our society and political climate encourages division and adversarial ways of being, as Christians we are reminded that each day, as we take up our cross, we face choices about our disposition and about the choices we make.

To what extent, in our ordinary daily lives, do we individually and as a community:

- contribute to the needs of the saints?

- extend hospitality to strangers?
- bless those who persecute us... bless and do not curse them?
- rejoice with those who rejoice?
- weep with those who weep?

Prayer of the Faithful / Intercessions

Leader: Let us pray to the God who welcomes and provides for all, who hears our prayers and in whose image we are all made.

- We pray for the Church: may we all, through our disposition and our actions, have a deep awareness of Christ in the other and may we grow in our openness and hospitality to the other.
God of grace; **hear our prayer.**
- We pray for refugees: may God's eternal and compassionate presence give them comfort in their insecurity, peace in their distress and hope in their desolation.
God of grace; **hear our prayer.**
- We pray for all who live in this land of Australia: may we live peacefully alongside one another, assisting each other to be all that God created us to be and rejoicing as the children of God in our diversity.
God of grace; **hear our prayer.**
- We pray for our world: may we grow our capacity for holding our possessions lightly and our passion for justice and peace strongly.
God of grace; **hear our prayer.**

Leader: God of all creation, hear our prayers and send your blessings on all people, especially those who are suffering in any way. We make our prayer through Jesus Christ who came as brother and servant to all. **Amen**

Sign of Peace:

Participants could be invited to offer one another a sign of peace, using their first language and traditional/cultural gesture.

Leader: Christ came and proclaimed the gospel: peace to those who are afar and peace to those who are near.

The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you
And also with you.

The Lord's Prayer:

Our Father could be said, and participants invited to pray it in their mother tongue.

Final Blessing

God bless our eyes, that we may recognise injustice.

God bless our ears, that we may hear the cry of the stranger.

God bless our mouths, that we may speak words of welcome to newcomers.

God bless our shoulders, that we may bear the weight of struggling for justice.

God bless our hands, that we may work together with all people to establish peace.

God bless our feet, that we may walk in the footsteps of Christ.

God bless our hearts, that we may be transformed into witnesses of truth, justice and love.

And the blessing of God Almighty - Father, the Son and Holy Spirit - be upon you and all those whose lives you touch.

All: **Amen**

Music

There may be people from various countries who could be invited to sing hymns, familiar to them, in their own language.

Hymns

The Deer's Cry: St Patrick's Breastplate (from CD The Pilgrim, Shaun Davey)

Who will speak: (from CD Agape, Marty Haugen)

On Holy Ground: (from CD Agape, Marty Haugen)

Australian Hymn Book Numbers 391 ; 185; 431;72; 532

Together in Song, Numbers 690; 421

Sing Alleluia, Numbers 42; 63

Alleluia Aotearoa, Numbers 82; 44; 125; 59

Hymn Books:

As One Voice Volumes 1 & 2 – (has CDs/tapes); 2/1 Clap Your Hands All You Nations (John L. Bell & Graham Maule); 2/3 Christ Be Our Light (Bernadette Farrell); 2/139 Gather Us O God (Monica Brown)