Catholic view – what inspires it

Some views around the nation

Some people say

When people come by boat

- they have no visa, so they are illegal
- many are not in danger but just want a richer life
- it is our right to decide who comes
- they die at sea and our people have to see them die or try to rescue them
- the people smugglers are deceiving them and taking their money
- we will be overrun with refugees and won't have the resources to cater for them
- they will take the jobs of Australians and use up social security
- some are terrorists or have committed other crimes so they are dangerous

Therefore we should

- stop them from coming by turning back the boats at sea
- put them in detention and never allow them to come to Australia
- make the treatment harsh enough to deter the people smugglers

Other people say

When people come by boat

- making application prior to arrival is often impossible
- they are desperate enough to leave home, employment, family etc. behind
- they have faced dangers because of their religion, ethnicity, gender or war
- they have the capacity to enrich our communities
- given the traumas they have faced, some will need a lot of support
- some may not behave as well as we would like
- as a country we are well placed to welcome people seeking asylum and some are not

Therefore we should

- welcome them onshore
- do security and health checks and assess their application for refugee status as quickly as possible
- allow them access to education, work and social security as appropriate
- work collaboratively at regional and international levels to work on the root causes and cater for the growing needs

Where to go from here

While it is not possible to ascribe motivations to particular ways of thinking, it is possible to be clear about the justice of some particular actions on the part of government and our nation generally. Such clarity can come via basic human values, from international law, and in addition there is a rich tradition in the Christian scriptures and Catholic social teaching.

WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

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104th WORLD DAY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES Pope Francis 2018

Every stranger who knocks at our door is an opportunity for an encounter with Jesus Christ, who identifies with the welcomed and rejected strangers of every age (*Matthew* 25:35-43). The Lord entrusts to the Church's motherly love every person forced to leave their homeland in search of a better future. This solidarity must be concretely expressed at every stage of the migratory experience – from departure through journey to arrival and return. This is a great responsibility, which the Church intends to share with all believers and men and women of good will, who are called to respond to the many challenges of contemporary migration with generosity, promptness, wisdom and foresight, each according to their own abilities.

In this regard, I wish to reaffirm that "our shared response may be articulated by four verbs: *to welcome, to protect, to promote* and *to integrate*".

REFUGEES: A CHALLENGE TO SOLIDARITY Pope John Paul II 1993

… in countries which had in the past offered a generous reception to refugees, there is now a disturbingly similar trend of political decisions aimed at reducing the number of entries and discouraging new requests for asylum. … respect for the fundamental right of asylum can never be denied when life is seriously threatened in one's homeland.

It is troubling to witness the reduction of resources earmarked for the solution of the refugee problem, as well as a weakening of political support for the structures purposely created for such humanitarian service.

JUBILEE CHARTER OF THE RIGHTS OF DISPLACED PEOPLE 2000

The charter was produced by a number of groups including the Catholic church and the UN commission for refugees. Below are just a few points.

- the right to not be turned back at the borders of the country where they seek protection and to receive a fair and prompt response to the request to be recognized as refugees and obtain asylum;
- the right to live in dignity and to receive the help necessary while the asylum application is being considered;
- the right to have a dignified life in the country of asylum for as long as the conditions of insecurity in the country of origin last through active participation in the social and productive life of the host country;
- the right of children and of adolescents to education, medical care and a secure environment where they can creatively develop their energies and potentials;
- the right to correct and objective information provided by the media that avoids unjust criminalizing or false alarmism about the events and situation in both the country of arrival and in those of origin.

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GOSPEL PASSAGES

Matthew 25:35 Jesus' way of judging a life

'For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in.

Luke 14:12-13 Jesus advice on hospitality

Then he turned to his host. "When you put on a luncheon or a banquet," he said, "don't invite your friends, brothers, relatives, and rich neighbours. For they will invite you back, and that will be your only reward. Instead, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind.

Mark 12:30-31 The great commandment

And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength. The second is equally important: Love your neighbour as yourself. No other commandment is greater than these.

Matthew 2:13-15 Jesus the asylum seeker

Now when they had gone, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up! Take the Child and His mother and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy Him." So Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt.

Matt 5:46-47 The way of Jesus

If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that.

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