

Today we celebrate Migrant and Refugee Sunday. Our parish is fortunate to have parishioners from many ethnic backgrounds. While we celebrate this rich cultural diversity we are also mindful of the difficulties entailed in moving to and settling in a new land. Such a move is never easy, and in the case of refugees, it is often highly dangerous and traumatizing.

I read in the paper on Friday that at the end of 2014 59.5 million people were forcibly displaced from their homes, driven out by persecution and war, the highest ever recorded. This should be a concern for people of all nations rather than being seen as someone else's problem.

Over recent years we have witnessed a tightening up of boarder security in our own country. As Christians we have an obligation to question whether this has been driven by fear and if this fear in turn has lead to an indifference in which, as a nation, we have shut our eyes and closed our hearts to the plight of those seeking freedom and a better life for their families. There is no argument that nations have a right to legislate laws on immigration. But we need to be careful that these laws never obfuscate the fundamental duty to help another human being in need. If compassion and justice are absent from the law then the morality of the law is in question.

The parish of St John the Apostle has had a long tradition of emphasizing compassion and supporting social justice initiatives. Migrant and Refugee Week is another opportunity to raise our awareness of this important dimension of our parish.

Peace & blessings
Gerard