



A MOVEMENT OF heart

**A Time of Prayer and Action
From 22nd August to 28th August**

**Seeking to rekindle a spirit of tender mercy and loving compassion
for all those who been forced to leave their homes.**

**A Time of Solidarity with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples, Refugees &
Asylum Seekers, and Pacific Islanders Facing the Challenges of Climate Change**

For tens of thousands of years, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have lived in close relationship with this land and with our God who created it. When the British occupied their country, they were subjected to much violence and humiliation. Many were forced to move from their traditional lands and many children were removed from their families and communities. Most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples live with great disadvantage and struggle to overcome the pain and injustice caused by loss of land, culture, family and identity.

Torres Strait Islanders are among the many peoples of the Pacific who are facing leaving their traditional homes for another reason – climate change. People like us in highly developed countries, with our consumer lifestyles, have most of the responsibility for the rising sea levels that are causing Torres Strait Islanders and people in places like Kiribati, Tuvalu and the Carteret Islands to take drastic measures, even relocation to other places.

For over a century, Australia has been a place to which many people facing violence and persecution in their own countries have fled. There are over 60 million people displaced in their own countries, living in refugee camps or on the move seeking protection in countries like Australia.

Just like them, Jesus spent a large part of his life as a refugee. He fled to Egypt with Joseph and Mary to escape Herod's murderous rampage in Bethlehem and lived there for many years. Jesus and his family knew well what it meant to flee from danger and live as strangers in a foreign land.

We in the Australian Church know about all this human suffering. We are made up of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, of many generations of people fleeing from danger and deprivation, and of Pacific peoples whose families back home are under great threat from climate change.

Pope Francis has spoken of a global indifference to the plight of vulnerable people facing immense challenges. Particularly in this Jubilee Year of Mercy, he invites us to reject this indifference and to, instead, reflect the boundless love and abundant mercy of God in our response to all people in great need.

We invite you to join *A Movement of the Heart*, a movement of Christians seeking to be at one with the loving and merciful heart of Jesus. In particular, we ask you to show your commitment to this movement by participating in a time of prayer and action from 22nd to 28th August.

Let us seek an ever-deepening union with God through a renewed commitment to the tender mercy and compassionate love which flows from Jesus' heart! May we become a powerful witness of this divine love and help to wash away the indifference towards the plight of the First Peoples of Australia, the people of the Pacific and refugees and asylum seekers.

A Time of Prayer and Action

Please set aside time every day during this special period to pray and to take action to overcome the globalisation of indifference.

Below are a selection of scriptural passages, a quotation from the Pope and a number of prayers. On each of the days from 22nd to 28th August set aside time at home, in your parish, your classroom or your agency to reflect on some of the scriptural passages and the quotations and to pray some or all of the prayers for the intention of overcoming the indifference and hard-heartedness of our world to people who have lost their lands by force or by climate change and for people forced to flee their lands because of violence and persecution.

From Scripture

And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. But as for those whose heart goes after their detestable things and their abominations, I will bring their deeds upon their own heads, declares the Lord God.

- Ezekiel 11: 19 - 21

You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.

- Matthew 23:26

They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart.

- Ephesians 4:18

Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.'

- Matthew 25: 32 – 40

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,

- Colossians 3: 12

And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. But as for those whose heart goes after their detestable things and their abominations, I will bring their deeds upon their own heads, declares the Lord God.

- Ezekiel 11: 19 - 21

The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God.

- Leviticus 19:34

Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy.

- Matthew 5: 7

From the Church

We have lost the sense of fraternal responsibility; we have fallen into the hypocritical attitude of the priest and of the servant of the altar that Jesus speaks about in the parable of the Good Samaritan: We look upon the brother half dead by the roadside, perhaps we think “poor guy,” and we continue on our way, it’s none of our business; and we feel fine with this. We feel at peace with this, we feel fine! The culture of well-being, that makes us think of ourselves, that makes us insensitive to the cries of others, that makes us live in soap bubbles, that are beautiful but are nothing, are illusions of futility, of the transient, that brings indifference to others, that brings even the globalization of indifference. In this world of globalization we have fallen into a globalization of indifference. We are accustomed to the suffering of others, it doesn’t concern us, it’s none of our business.

- Pope Francis, 8 July 2013

I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all. The worldwide ecological movement has already made considerable progress and led to the establishment of numerous organizations committed to raising awareness of these challenges. Regrettably, many efforts to seek concrete solutions to the environmental crisis have proved ineffective, not only because of powerful opposition but also because of a more general lack of interest. Obstructionist attitudes, even on the part of believers, can range from denial of the problem to indifference, nonchalant resignation or blind confidence in technical solutions. We require a new and universal solidarity. As the bishops of Southern Africa have stated: “Everyone’s talents and involvement are needed to redress the damage caused by human abuse of God’s creation”. All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents.

- Pope Francis, Laudato Si No. 14

Professor Mick Dodson is a member of the Yawuru people in the Broome area of the southern Kimberley region of Western Australia. Currently Director of the Australian National University’s National Centre for Aboriginal Studies, he was Australia’s first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. He has expressed the challenge succinctly and starkly:

Social justice is what faces you in the morning. It is awakening in a house with adequate water supply, cooking facilities and sanitation. It is the ability to nourish your children and send them to school where their education not only equips them for employment but reinforces their knowledge and understanding of their cultural inheritance. It is the prospect of genuine employment and good health: a life of choices and opportunity, free from discrimination.

In a nation that enjoys a vibrant economy, where governments boast of their careful financial management, the question remains: why have we not been able to eliminate these dire circumstances from the everyday experience of many Indigenous people?

As Pope John Paul II commented 20 years ago: *what has been done cannot be undone. But what can now be done to remedy the deeds of yesterday must not be put off till tomorrow.*

- 2006 ACBC Social Justice Statement



Actions

- ◇ Find out from your local Council who the traditional owners in your area are and reach out to them to establish a relationship.
- ◇ Use the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Sunday liturgy resources produced by NATSICC.
- ◇ Use the resources of the Refugee Council of Australia to encourage awareness and support for refugees.
- ◇ Use the resources from CAPSA to advocate for just and compassionate refugee and asylum seeker policies.
- ◇ Donate your time and practical support for refugee services such as Romero Centre, MDA Ltd, Access Inc and the Red Cross.
- ◇ Reach out to Torres Strait Islanders and Pacific Islanders in your local area to build relationships that help you to learn about climate change impacts on islands in our region.
- ◇ Find out what local environmental groups are doing about climate change action and participate in their work.
- ◇ Contact candidates in your electorate and for the Senate and urge them to support national action which truly promotes justice for Australia’s First Peoples, for refugees and asylum seekers, and for Pacific communities affected by climate change impacts.

Other Suggestions

- ◇ Share this prayer and action guide with others in your family and neighbourhood and with other students or work colleagues.
- ◇ Use the prayers and other resources at the start of meetings in your parish or school during the month or ask various groups in your parish or school to lead a time of prayer and reflection on days during the special period.
- ◇ Like the Facebook Page for “A Movement of the Heart” and share it with others asking them to also like the page and join in the period of prayer and action. The Facebook page is at: <https://www.facebook.com/cjpcbrisbane/>

Prayers

Loving and merciful Jesus
Come dwell in our hearts
So that we may love as you love,
So that our mercy and compassion might be as abundant as yours.

Soften our hearts
So that we may never be indifferent to the plight of others
Especially those forced to flee persecution and violence.
Make our hearts like yours
So that all may know of God's wondrous and boundless love.
Amen.

Protector of migrants and itinerants, assist with maternal care all men, women, and children who are forced to flee their lands in search of a future and of hope. May their meeting with us and our people not become a source of new and heavier slavery and humiliation.

Mother of mercy, ask forgiveness for us who, blinded by selfishness, concerned by our interests and prisoners of our own fears, have become distracted towards the needs and sufferings of our brothers.

Refuge of sinners, obtain the conversion of heart for those who generate war, hate and poverty, who exploit their brothers and their fragility, who make an undignified commerce of human life.

From Pope Francis' Prayer for Migrants & Itinerants

Prayer for the First Peoples of Australia

Spirit of God
Who has hovered over this land from the beginning
We acknowledge the great sin of the dispossession of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this land.
With dispossession has come loss of culture, family ties and dignity.
Heal the indifference which allows the pain of dispossession to continue.

Let us reach out in the cause of justice with a determination to make things right
So that all may live in this land in dignity and in peace.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our reconciler. Amen.

A Prayer for People Facing Relocation Due to Climate Change

Creator God
You have blessed our Torres Strait Islander sisters and brothers and the peoples of the Pacific
With lands and seas which are bountiful and marked by great beauty.

Through our ignorance and indifference, our wealthy lifestyles have led to rising sea levels and changing climate which cause great environmental damage and threaten the very existence of their island homes.

Give us eyes that see the damage, minds that understand the problems and hearts that reach out in great generosity to support our sisters and brothers as they take action to address their great concerns.

May we listen to them and work with them with respect and commitment.

Give us new hearts so that our sisters and brothers can face the challenges of climate change with a new hope. Amen.

Consider praying one or more decades of the Rosary each day as part of this commitment to prayer and action.

Prayers of Intercession

We pray that all those fleeing persecution and violence around the world will find welcoming and generous communities which will offer them safety and hope. Lord, hear us. All: Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia, deeply wounded by dispossession and loss of culture, family and identity, may find healing and justice with the support of compassionate and loving people. Lord, hear us. All: Lord, hear our prayer.

We pray for our Torres Strait Islander neighbours and for the peoples of the Pacific who are facing major environmental damage and even the loss of their homes because of the impacts of climate change, that they will find many Australians willing to provide respectful support as they seek to respond to these enormous challenges. Lord, hear us. All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Songs for Special Gatherings

I Will Never Forget You My People by Carey Landry

All Are Welcome by Marty Haugen

Community of Christ by Bernadette Farrell

Web Resource

You can find resources on the following web sites:

Reconciliation Australia

www.reconciliation.org.au

NAIDOC Week

www.naidoc.org.au

National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council

www.natsicc.org.au

350 Pacific

<http://350pacific.org/>

Friends of the Earth

<https://www.facebook.com/Friends-of-the-Earth-Climate-Frontlines-716874268395825/>

Refugee Council of Australia

www.refugeecouncil.org.au

Catholic Alliance for People Seeking Asylum

www.capsa.org.au

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