

**for Refugees and Asylum Seekers**

# **150 Days of Action**



The Holy Father, Pope Francis, has declared 2021 to be the year of St. Joseph, who was himself a refugee and along with Mother Mary the guardians of Jesus as a refugee child. This year is an opportunity for all of us to celebrate and reflect on St. Joseph, described by Pope Francis in his apostolic letter which instituted the year, [\*Patris corde\*](#) (“With a Father’s Heart”), as a beloved father, a father who is creatively courageous, a father in the shadows.

In this letter, Pope Francis specifically names St. Joseph as “the special patron of all those forced to leave their native lands because of war, hatred, persecution and poverty.” Since then, Pope Francis has also added to St. Joseph’s titles that of “[Patron of Refugees](#)”.

The timing of such a declaration is critical because, after two decades, it is clear that Australia’s treatment of those who come to us seeking protection needs to change. For the past twenty years, refugees and people seeking asylum in Australia have experienced inhumane and cruel treatment.

We need to re-imagine what it would be like to come to a place like Australia and find the way to safety barred – to find a toxic political atmosphere that describes our children, our mums and dads as “illegals” and “queue-jumpers” as those trying to manipulate the charity of Australia. Australia needs a new heart, a new way to and show mercy. We think there is an opportunity to engage across all our communities, religious, schools, parishes and workplaces to become active in a new way to advocate with those who come seeking our protection.

To honour and acknowledge this special time in the year of St. Joseph and his role as the Patron of Refugees, a coalition, led by the Sisters of St. Joseph and the Justice and Peace Office of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney, has come together to initiate 150 days of action across Australia, to engage with people of good will, and advocate to change our country’s attitude and policies towards those seeking protection in Australia.

As part of the campaign and in the name of St. Joseph the Refugee, we robustly exhort the Federal Government:

1. To provide income support and a financial safety net for all people seeking asylum in Australia
2. To end temporary protection visas and create a clear pathway to permanent residency
3. To ensure access to family reunion for refugees and people seeking asylum in Australia

This campaign began on 1 May 2021, the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker and will conclude with a Day of Lamentation and Call on Sunday 26th September 2021, the World Day of Migrants and Refugees.

We hope that you will be part of these 150 days of action as they develop in coming months.

You can read the prayers of lament recited during the launch of the campaign which took place on 1 May 2021 at St Mary Mackillop Place, North Sydney [here](#).

There are a number of resources that have been developed for the campaign which are available for you to download below and personalise according to your circumstances. A PDF summary of this campaign is also available [here](#).

1. A Bulletin [notice](#) for parishes to introduce this campaign to your parish.
2. A [postcard](#) which summarises the activities of the campaign and our demands of the government which can be printed and shared
3. A template of a [letter](#) that can be sent to MPs about the campaign and to request a meeting. Please feel free to personalise it with your own experience of assisting and advocating for people seeking protection
4. A [list](#) of 18 things you can do to support people seeking asylum that is suitable for a school or parish context and which can also be adapted to support local refugee support organisations in your area.
5. A [letter head](#) template that can be used for correspondence as part of this campaign.