



Diocesan e-News

MIGRANT & REFUGEE SUNDAY

St Joseph's Parish Warrnambool celebrated the cultural diversity of their community. The Catholic Church has a strong tradition of reaching out to Migrant and Refugee Groups emphasising an attitude of hospitality and respect for all people. Migrant & Refugee Sunday is one occasion when the Parish can celebrate the varied cultures that exist in their community and especially consider the plight of the many who have fled their homelands in fear.

There was memorabilia from various countries on display, with refreshments following the 10.30am Mass. Fr John Fitzgerald invites people from other countries to give a reflection at Mass on this Sunday and Catriona Campbell's story of being an immigrant can be read below:

My name is Catriona Campbell and I spent some of my early years on a small island, the most north westerly inhabited island in Scotland, the Isle of Barra. It is a rugged and windswept home to approx 1200 people. The twice daily shipping forecast on radio 4 being the most listened to programme, waiting to hear what the Atlantic Ocean has in store, as the islands main industry then was fishing, with many folk also working a croft.

The islanders speak Gaelic, in lilting tones, almost as sing song as the folk songs handed down. The Church, Our Lady Star of the Sea, looked over the bay and the church itself was central to many of the islands social and spiritual activities.

Although we moved back to Glasgow when I was in early primary school, I would spend all my holidays back on the island with my grandparents, loving the freedom it gave, being safe, the sea almost always being in sight and spending time with my Grandmother.



Growing up during the Thatcher years in power, we had miners strikes, the Falklands war, the troubles and bombings in Ireland, bigotry and hatred in regard to religion, many businesses not employing Catholics. I was keen to travel and see what life would be like elsewhere. So I arrived late March 1989 in Melbourne on a one way ticket, it was all I could afford after paying for my visa, medical, chest X-ray and money for lodgings put aside.

I had secured a job at the new partly built Sunshine hospital. I felt safe there, it was like working for the United Nations, most staff being migrants like myself. Many coming after the Second World War and more again leaving a depressed Europe in the 1960s.

Arriving with my suitcase still flying somewhere unknown, it was Smelka from Serbia who shared her clothes. Mairi introduced me to Op shops, to help me out, till my case finally arrived. Living in the Nurses home at Western General in Footscray, I would walk down Barkly Street to West Footscray train station to take the early train to work. I would often be the only female in the carriage with the migrant factory workers. They would share their papers and news from home each morning, encouraging me to join in.

On my days off I would head to Melbourne, enjoying the gardens and museums or I would take a regional train from Spencer Street station to Bendigo, Ballarat and Geelong as I explored Victoria. Returning to work staff would ask where I had been, many never having ventured from the city itself.



Despite speaking English, it should have been easy but Glasgow folk do talk quickly and I was just as often misunderstood as my European colleagues. On one occasion during my first week, I entered a large department store and I asked the assistant where the linen department was, she replied "in Manchester", I replied, "I'm not English" and left.

The first year was hard, I missed family and friends. Working shifts, nursing in the hospital it was hard to join groups, even getting to church on Sunday could be difficult, with mass times and few buses, so I would go during the week instead. My first Christmas was perhaps the hardest of all, Christmas in the sunshine was strange. Watching *Carols by Candlelight* was perhaps my greatest homesick moment, as everyone was talking about spending time with family and friends. I was fortunate in that just two weeks earlier I had met my husband to be, Jim, who invited me to spend Christmas day after my shift with his family. His parents had been migrants displaced from Poland as a result of the Second World War. I had some amazing conversations with Ostap, his father, about his journey and settling in Australia - it made my struggle easy.

Things I had to adjust to;

When asked "how are you"? If you didn't say "good" people would ask again.

Saturday night on the TV- *Hey Hey It's Saturday*, watching Ossie Ostrich and Pluka duck!

Getting used to the coldest time of the day, not being during the night when you're warm in bed, but when you're getting up in the morning.

Franco Cozzo adverts on the TV.

People not asking what religion you are, but congratulating you on going to church and having a faith.

It was church that provided me with that sense of community firstly when I joined the parish of St Bernard's with Fr Glasheen and then St Joseph's Warrnambool, with Fr Eugene McKinnon. Being a migrant has given me the opportunity to travel, explore a new country and change my nationality. For me I wasn't forced to leave my country of birth because of war, persecution, economic oppression, beliefs and it was difficult. The church gives friendships and shelter to migrants like myself and I encourage you to do the same.

