

LIKE JESUS CHRIST, FORCED TO FLEE

WELCOMING, PROTECTING,
PROMOTING AND INTEGRATING
INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS



106TH
WORLD DAY OF
MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

SUNDAY, 27 SEPTEMBER 2020



Sunday greetings to the members of the Boonah Catholic community and beyond on the 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

This Sunday is an international commemoration of The Holy See: World Day of Migrants and Refugees.

Throughout our bulletin this Sunday, we will be highlighting some the material because it is so helpful to serving our neighbour:

<https://www.acmro.catholic.org.au/resources/migrant-refugee-kit/booklet/1188-migrant-and-refugee-kit-2020/file>

1. REFLECTIONS ON THE SUNDAY WORD.

We share two reflections on the Sunday scriptures our church selects for this Sunday.



The **first Sunday preaching** is offered by Marge Kloos, S.C., D. Min. is a Sister of Charity of Cincinnati and is serving as a member of the Leadership Team of her religious community.

As an associate professor of religious and pastoral studies at Mount St. Joseph University in Cincinnati, Marge has taught undergraduate and graduate courses in Ministry, Spirituality, and Ecological and Social Justice.

She also taught in a regional lay ministry formation program for thirteen years.

In 2008, Marge served as a scholar in residence at Tantur Ecumenical Institute for Theological Studies in Jerusalem where she researched the impact of intergenerational trauma on women's spirituality.

Having travelled with students enrolled in immersion courses to the US-Mexico Border, Cherokee Boundary in North Carolina, and Ireland since 1995, she has been enriched as a citizen and searching human.

Here is a small excerpt from her homily:

The vineyard is the place of communion, where mercy, healing, justice and equality consume the destructive, choking weeds of relational sin.

"Go out and work in the vineyard today... go with the attitude of Christ."

Take the path God opens before you. Believe that as living grace you can enter the vineyard as renewing justice and reconciling Love.

Go because your integrity will grind down the rocks smothering the vines.

Go because the desperate cries for justice from every corner must be heard by a tender heart...your heart.

<https://www.catholicwomenpreach.org/preaching/09272020>

The second gospel reflection on the readings for today is offered by Father Shammi Perera, the pastor of St. Mary's Cathedral, Hobart. It is included the resources for World Day of Migrants and Refugees:

Due to a worldwide pandemic, movement between and even within nations has been severely restricted and in some cases prohibited. Our experience during this period of lockdown has starkly reminded that we are communal beings. We are made for relationship with others. We feel distressed and mentally anguished when we are cut off from our loved ones and fellow human beings. In this respect we have all got to experience something of what migrants and refugees experience when they are forced to leave loved ones behind. Not being able to have physical contact with the ones we love involves a particular type of suffering.

In this time when we are faced by such difficult circumstances, the first reading today reminds us that Yahweh, our God, is a just God. Ezekiel explains to his fellow Israelites that sin is a by-product of man's own choice to abandon integrity, and his conscious decision to embrace a culture of death and fear.

It is because of sin that so many of us fail to see in the migrants and refugees, who come to our shores every year, the image of Christ. We must seek to be like our God, the God of justice, to those who come to our shores seeking help. As a nation we must seek justice for all, we need to ask the question that echoes in the book of Genesis: "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen 4:9).

The iconic presentation of the exile of the Holy Family into Egypt due to the brutal tyrannical rule of Herod (Mt 2:13-15) provides broad parallels for those modern tyrannies of a political and economic nature that seek to rule without God. Everyday throughout the world our fellow brothers and sisters suffer violence and death at the hand of tyrannical rulers.

Just as the Holy Family did, these men and women have been forced to flee their homeland. Later in his ministry, Jesus identifies himself with "migrants"; the landless, the homeless and the most marginalised by pointing to the itinerant nature of his ministry:

"The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." (Matt 8:20). He then brings this insight to its fullness in reminding us of our accountability and responsibility to care for the "stranger" because by caring for him or her, one cares for God Himself: *Come, you whom my Father has blessed, inherit the*

kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. . . . for I was a stranger and you made me welcome .

. . . (Mt 25:34-36). In extending our hospitality and care for the vulnerable migrant brothers

and sisters from all walks of life and from all distressing circumstances, "some people have entertained angels without knowing it." (Heb 13:2).



The social profile of the Catholic Community in Australia based on the 2016 census revealed that of the Catholics who attend the Sunday Eucharist, 26.2 percent are born overseas. That is, one in four persons in our pews for the Sunday Eucharist is from a distant shore. We have certainly proven that "For those who've come across the seas, we've boundless plains to share." But have we done enough? "Remember your mercies, O Lord." (Ps 24:6) Is the cry today of the responsorial psalm. The mercy of God is indeed boundless. He doesn't measure His mercies when He lavishes them on humanity. That is who God is. He expects individuals and nations to emulate his same merciful love. Land is a recurring symbol of God's mercy to Israel. It points to the truth of a Promised Land, which refers to inseparable twofold nuances, namely, land as a physical place of natural bounties, with plenty for food, water, and what we require for our physical needs; and land as a symbolic place of liberty and harmony, where we are free to worship the Lord. It is interesting to note that land has a profound and equal importance as a place where justice prevails and any form of discrimination has no room. Having personally journeyed with the Syrian and Iraqi Christian brothers and sisters who have arrived in Australia since 2016, I can say they feel God's mercy in this "promised land" of Australia where there are plentiful material goods and human liberty, peace and harmony flourish.



This has been the experience for all people who have left their homes, loved ones and familiar surroundings for a better life, free from persecution and deprivation. We are not alone in this experience. Jesus himself, along with Our Lady and Joseph, had this experience. Pope Pius XII spoke beautifully about the flight of the Holy Family a few years after the Second World War when the world witnessed unprecedented human migration.

The émigré Holy Family of Nazareth, fleeing into Egypt, is the archetype of every refugee family. Jesus, Mary and Joseph, living in exile in Egypt to escape the fury of an evil king, are, for all times and all places, the models and protectors of every migrant, alien and refugee of whatever kind who, whether compelled by fear of persecution or by want, is forced to leave his native land, his beloved parents and relatives, his close friends, and to seek a foreign soil. (The Holy Family of Nazareth in Exile by Pope Pius XII in 1952).

This is the story of Jesus, Our Lord and brother who through His experience as a refugee offers humanity communion, hope and strength.



In the Gospel today, having narrated the parable of the two sons in Matthew 21:28-32, Jesus poses the question to the Jewish religious authorities, “Which of the two did the father’s will?” He places the same question before the conscience of the

entire Australian nation. Are our words mere talkfests? Like the second son, do we easily give way to complacency as a nation? We speak great words of committing to help others, but do we follow through with our actions? The first son despite his initial negative response actually does the will of the father. Despite his words he acts, with love, and goes into the vineyard. Are we fulfilling our responsibility of love

and care? Do we really see in every human person the image of God (Gen 1:27).

The second reading today from St Paul’s Letter to the Philippian community demands us to conform our thinking to that of Jesus, “Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus” (Phil 2:5). It is only through such a paradigm shift in thinking that one can recognise that each human person rightfully deserves to be treated according to their full human dignity. On a more challenging level, for a Christian, each human person, irrespective of his or her race, creed, colour, language, culture and social status, is a loved child of God. Pope Francis set the tone to his Petrine ministry by appealing to the universal Church to acknowledge the gravity of this responsibility, “Dear friends, let us not forget the flesh of Christ which is in the flesh of refugees: their flesh is the flesh of Christ. It is also your task to direct all the institutions working in the area of forced migration to new forms of co-responsibility.” (*Address of the Holy Father Pope Francis to participants in the Plenary of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People* 13th May 2013).

As we celebrate the 106th World Day of Migrants and Refugees amidst a pandemic sweeping across the world with the theme chosen by our Holy Father Pope Francis, “Forced like Jesus Christ to flee,” we must pray to the Holy Spirit, to enlighten our individual and national conscience. To renew our hearts with the love of God and through this a genuine love for all human beings. To assist with this I wish to place a few questions for your reflection: Are we pastorally sensitive to the needs of migrants in our community? Do we genuinely embody Christ’s love for the migrant and refugee in our actions? Are we really doing enough for migrants and refugees in Australia at parish and organisational levels? Do we speak with a prophetic voice, on behalf of the 25 needs and the rights of migrants, especially for those refugees and persons seeking asylum on discriminatory grounds, which is an integral part of our Christian baptismal vocation? Have we properly engaged in an interfaith dialogue with migrants who come from different faith backgrounds so that they might more clearly see and understand the light of Christ, in both our words and deeds?

May we see the face of Christ in all our brothers and sisters who are “Forced like Jesus Christ to flee.”



Pope Francis unveiling monument to migrants, Angels Unaware, by Canadian sculptor Timothy Schmalz, 29 September, 2019.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/29/world/europe/pope-francis-migrants-sculpture.html>

2. Since the changes introduced following the presence of the COVID-19 virus, **LITURGY BRISBANE** provided for free the *Sunday Readings for home reflection* and second resource for families, *Praying with Children*.

From the first Sunday of September, parishes were invited to take out an annual subscription. We have done so, and last this Sunday both are included as attachments to our Sunday e-bulletin.



The *first* attachment contains the Sunday readings with associated commentaries and prayers. It is suggested that families gather to read the Scriptures aloud together.

The *second* attachment is designed for families with younger children. An extract from the Sunday gospel is provided, along with several reflection questions, a family activity as well as a worksheet for children.

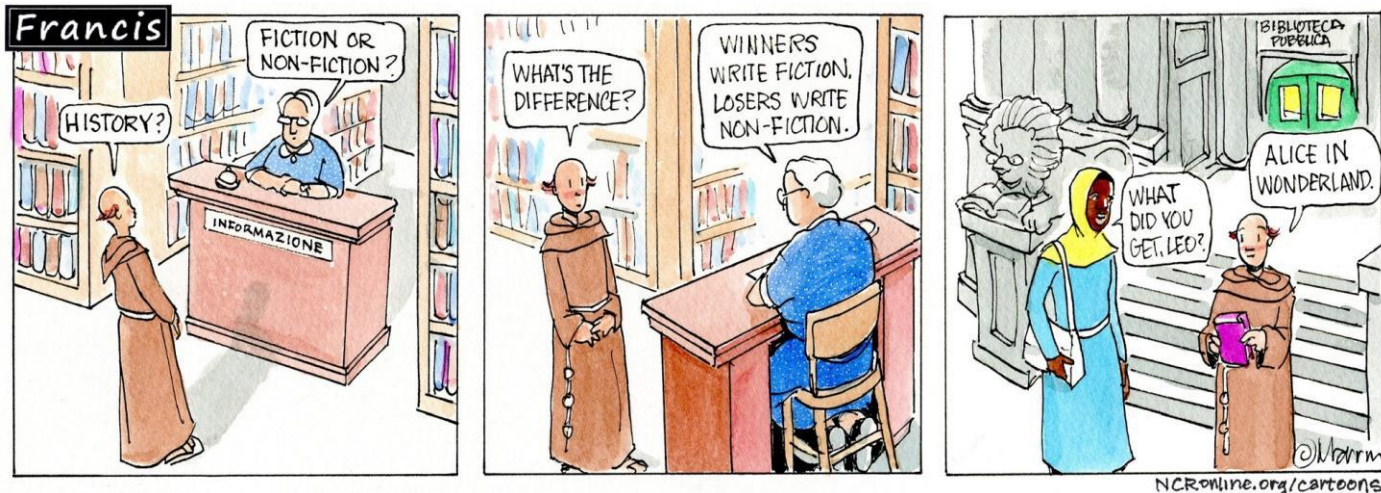
3. For those of us unable to gather for Sunday eucharist today, you may wish to prayerfully watch live-recordings of communities celebrating eucharist especially in our Cathedral of St. Stephen, Brisbane. This link takes you to the live-streaming page:

<https://brisbanecatholic.org.au/multimedia/on-demand-web-casts/>

Live-streamed daily eucharist continues at Lavender Bay, Sydney . . . prayerful and uplifting. Start time is 0730 Mon-Fri:

<https://www.northsydney Catholics.com/spirituality/liturgy/mass-on-demand>

4. FRANCIS, THE COMIC STRIP by Pat Marrin.

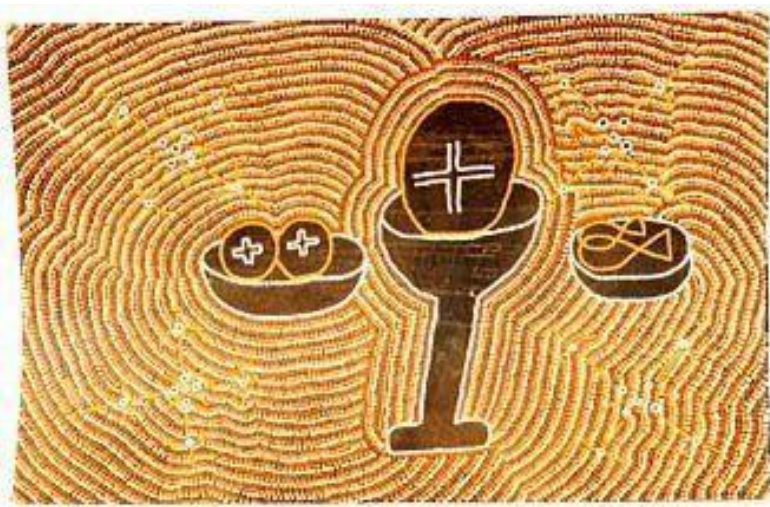


22nd September 2020

5. We pray with and for those who are sick in our parish and beyond: all across the globe infected with COVID-19; former pastor of Boonah parish Fr.Ellis Clifford, Chris Healy, Bill Castley, Paul White, Thyrlene Devin, Bridget Muller, Liliana Toohill, Libby Shields, Jonathon Hancock, Marko Babic, Dermot Peters, Max Gardiner, Nicole Wimmer, Bernice Lippiatt, Pat Toohill, Trish Merlehan, Suzy Collyer, Clare Conway, Pat Shannon, Bernadette Pinchin, Simon Greatrex and sick members of parish families and those beyond our parish boundaries.

6. *Boonah Parish happenings . . .*

♦ From the first Sunday of September, the start of Spring, Sunday morning eucharist times returned to the schedule of 7.30am Harrisville and 9.30am Boonah. Sunday eucharist on Saturday evening in Boonah will remain at 5.00pm.



SUNDAY EUCHARIST schedule is:

Saturday
5.00pm (Boonah church)

Sunday
7.30am (Harrisville church)
9.30am (Boonah church)

Our WEEKDAY EUCHARIST schedule for this new week, the 26th Week of Ordinary Time, is:

Wednesday	30th September	6.00pm, Peak Crossing church
Thursday	1st October	5.30pm, Boonah church
Friday	2nd October	8.00am, Boonah church

♦ On last Friday, Laura Edwards from Ripley and Vince O'Shea from Thagoona celebrated the rite of Marriage. We have been praying for them for a month. It was a fantastic afternoon in terms of weather and a very prayerful celebration. See the stunning setting in Silverdale:



♦ It is good news that Queensland and other parts of the country are improving in terms of reduction in numbers of people infected with the COVID-19 virus.

We are to remain vigilant and continue to abide by the Industry Safe Plan.

Our Church of Brisbane *Workplace Health and Safety team* emailed us at the end of the week to ensure we continue to do what we must.

So on our behalf, I again thank our COVID Crews in Boonah, Harrisville and now Peak Crossing who clean the churches after our Sunday eucharist. We remain grateful to you. Thanks also to a few good people who come to offer and clean after eucharist. We only need two people and your offer is noted with thanks.

♦ Last Sunday all parishes across the Church of Brisbane conducted the Annual Catholic Campaign.

Thanks to the *smart people at Boonah* who were able to access Archbishop Coleridge's homily and appeal on the video attachment for all of us.



2020 ANNUAL CATHOLIC CAMPAIGN

Our Church • Our Mission • Our Community

Please return envelopes this Sunday and next. Brochures may be taken home if people were away last Sunday.

♦ It is the second week of the September school holidays. We hope all students are enjoying the break and so too the staff of our schools.

7. FRANCIS, THE COMIC STRIP by Pat Marrin.

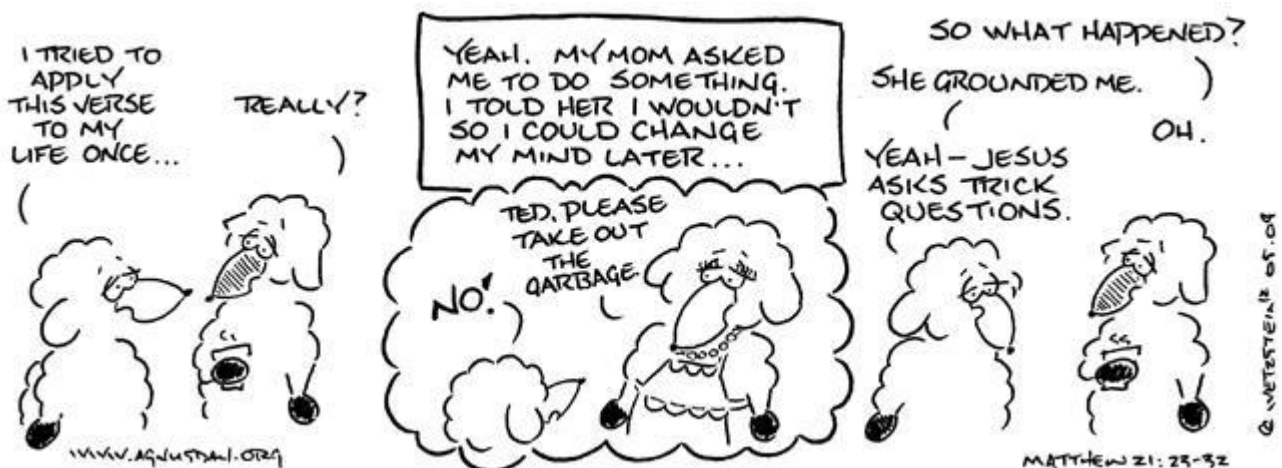


24th September 2020

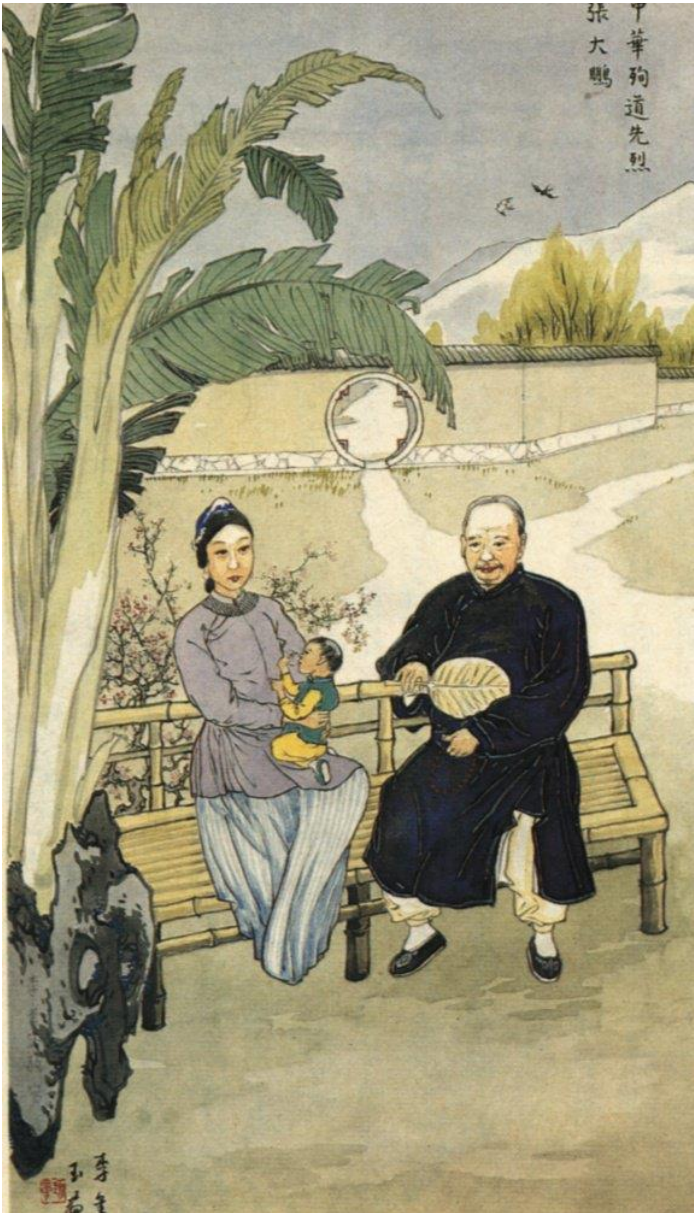


8. **THE CATHOLIC LEADER** digital edition is available free at the moment and can be sent to your inbox every Thursday morning while the pandemic is still with us. Sign up on <https://bit.ly/2ShdcSZ>. The editor and his team hopes this offer gives us all a sense of connection, inspiration and renewal in the faith, at a time when living the faith has changed.

9. Smile! An offering inspired by our Sunday gospel . . .



10. At the end of Francis' 2020 message for the 106th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, *Like Jesus Christ, forced to flee. Welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating internally displaced persons*, he prays:



Father, you entrusted to Saint Joseph what you held most precious:
the child Jesus and his Mother,
in order to protect them from the dangers and threats of the wicked.

Grant that we may experience his protection and help.
May he, who shared in the sufferings of those who flee from the hatred of the powerful,
console and protect all our brothers and sisters driven by war, poverty and necessity
to leave their homes and their lands to set out as refugees for safer places.

Help them, through the intercession of Saint Joseph,
to find the strength to persevere,
give them comfort in sorrows and courage amid their trials.

Grant to those who welcome them some of the tender love of this just and wise father,
who loved Jesus as a true son and sustained Mary at every step of the way.

May he, who earned his bread by the work of his hands,
watch over those who have seen everything in life taken away
and obtain for them the dignity of a job and the serenity of a home.

We ask this through Jesus Christ,
your Son,
whom Saint Joseph saved by fleeing to Egypt,
and trusting in the intercession of the Virgin Mary,
whom he loved as a faithful husband in accordance with your will.
Amen.

11. To ponder (again) . . . “what good Catholics should look like and how they should behave”:

I will summarize in a simple litany some of the elements in the change in style of the Church indicated by the council’s vocabulary:

*from commands to invitations,
from laws to ideals,
from threats to persuasion,
from coercion to conscience,
from monologue to conversation,
from ruling to serving,
from withdrawn to integrated,
from vertical and top-down to horizontal,
from exclusion to inclusion,
from hostility to friendship,
from static to changing,
from passive acceptance to active engagement,
from prescriptive to principled,
from defined to open-ended,
from behaviour-modification to conversion of heart,
from the dictates of law to the dictates of conscience,
from external conformity to the joyful pursuit of holiness.*

When those elements are taken in the aggregate, they indicate a model of spirituality. This, they say, is what good Catholics should look like and this is how they should behave. That means the elements indicate what the Church should look like and how it should behave. This is a significant model-shift. This is a teaching of the council.

- Fr. John O’Malley SJ, 2006



12. Jesuit priest, Fr. Andrew Hamilton, is consulting editor of Eureka Street and writer at Jesuit Social Services. Some friends of Boonah parish alerted me to this piece. Thanks!

In early October the Senate will vote on a bill that allows the Minister for Home Affairs to ban any items that he prohibits within immigration detention centres. His judgment will not be reviewable. The items that have caused most controversy have been mobile phones.



The objections to the legislation focus correctly on the infringement of human rights. That phrase, however, is bloodless. It might suggest that rights form a list to be ticked off. Human rights are better conceived as a way of speaking about the conditions necessary for people to live decent human lives. The proper place from which to reflect on them is the actual lives of the people who are affected.

When considering the legislation, we should begin by asking what place phones have in the life of people seeking protection. Phones connect people with their family members both in Australia and overseas, allowing parents and children, sisters and brothers, friends and acquaintances to maintain their relationships. The phone is the medium by which they can see the mountains and lakes of the lands they were forced to flee, the flowers, the streets and the towns. For some people who have been detained for seven years or more, it is a lifeline. It allows them to hear news of their local areas and perspectives on its conflicts that they could never find in Australian media. It allows them to consult friends and agencies about the arcane and forbidding language of Government communications and to seek resources in their all-important claim for asylum.

The phone has also been a medium for creativity. Behrouz Bouchani, the author of the prize-winning book *No Friend but the Mountains*, composed his work by texting. In the time of COVID when no visitors have been allowed into the centres, the phone has been their only contact with relatives and people whom they trust. In the enforced absence of chaplains, too, the phone has allowed them to join others at online services, some of them celebrated by chaplains. In short, the phone has been an artery in the distinctively human life that distinguishes human beings from animals. Once it is cut, the lives of people detained can

begin to die away. As would your life and mine wither were we placed in a similar situation.

The amendments to the Migration Act substantially follow an earlier policy that banned mobile phones, later found unlawful by the Federal Court. In the legislation the Minister has the power to declare prohibited items in detention centres and for detainees. It also allows officers to search premises and people without a warrant. These broad powers include no requirement for a well-founded suspicion that individuals who possess items declared prohibited or searched pose a threat.

The confiscation of phones, searching of personal belongings and strip searches are highly intrusive and humiliating actions with potential to injure the mental health of those exposed to them. The reasons offered in justification are sketchy and general — to respond to criminal behaviour and prevent plans to escape and create disorder. They also point out that detention centres house both people seeking protection and people subject to deportation after serving sentences for crimes.

None of these reasons are convincing. There are already adequate powers to respond to disorder and criminal acts by individuals. Nor, in the case of a captive population, is there the urgent need to act without seeking a warrant for the action. A general power to confiscate phones, strip search people and search their possessions would be regarded as an overreach of power and an invitation to abuse when directed against any other group in society. In a detention centre where people are locked up with officers, the powers create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation that increases tension and harm to mental health.

'How this system works is explored in its appalling and heart-breaking detail in Behrouz Bouchani's book, itself ironically made possible only through the medium of text messages sent by phone. It diminishes the humanity not only of its intended victims but also of the people who administer it.'

The Government itself is responsible for housing together people seeking protection and those facing deportation. The practice is not ideal. Many refugees, who have broken no law in seeking protection, feel uncomfortable in the company of people who have committed crimes. They fear with good reason that they will be seen as criminals, rightly imprisoned. The only legal justification for Immigration detention is administrative need. It is not punitive. That they should be made subject to such punitive measures as strip searching and the confiscation of their phones on the grounds of a forced association with people detained on other grounds is outrageous. It might be said in passing, too, that the people brought to detention centres from prison, many of whom have been jailed for relatively minor offences, have already served their sentence, only to find themselves again locked up. Any resentment they may feel is understandable.

The apologists for the legislation, of course, say that these powers will be used only selectively, in which case they should legislatively be limited to people who can be demonstrated to pose a risk. Experience, however, suggests scepticism about the good faith of such promises when made by governments. We need to think only of the assurances, made after enquiries into the treatment of children in correction facilities, that solitary confinement, hoods and other punishments will be exceptional. The next enquiry commonly reveals them to have become routine.

In assessing any assurance by governments about the treatment of defenceless people we need to consider whether the assurance is consistent with the attitudes ingrained in policy. In Australia the attitudes to people seeking protection are controlled by the logic of deterrence in which the sufferings of those held detention centres in Australia and its off-shore dependencies are designed to warn off others who might be tempted to come. This logic involves treating people as things, as means to other ends. It inevitably creates an authoritarian and

brutal system in which officials must be unquestioningly complicit. Its nature is to remove from people the rights which are grounded in a shared humanity and hunger for a decent life, and to restore them arbitrarily and unreliably as privileges. Legislation then acts to allay any ethical doubts that those who execute it will have. We may be sure that the practices it allows will be used and abused.

How this system works is explored in its appalling and heartbreaking detail in Behrouz Bouchani's book, itself ironically made possible only through the medium of text messages sent by phone. It diminishes the humanity not only of its intended victims but also of the people who administer it. It corrodes the ethical sensibility of those involved in searching and depredating as surely as it diminishes the lives of those searched and disconnected. Though disguised in beige words this legislation is a knife held at the throat of Australian decency as well as of the humanity of people who seek protection.

<https://www.eurekastreet.com.au/article/mobile-phone-bill-threatens-dignity-and-decency>

13. Last Saturday my father, Hugo, visited our parish after attending the *Carnival of Flowers* in Toowoomba earlier that day. Dad stayed overnight Saturday, accompanied me to the Sunday eucharistic celebrations at Harrisville & Boonah on Sunday morning, joined some folk for coffee and conversation down the main street post the 0930 Boonah eucharist and left for Brisbane on his Triumph *Bonneville* at 1300. Dad asked me to thank one and all for their very kind welcome. It was good to have him visit and 'stay over'. We were both amused that Dad was again mistaken for my 'brother'!

Enjoy the new week ahead.

John,
pastor, Boonah Catholic community

