

Vigil for those seeking asylum in our land



*If only you could feel how much it hurt to be locked up behind the fence.
If only you could see how my tears are falling down every moment.
If only you could know how much it means to me, to be a normal person,
Like any other – like people outside the fence.
If only you could see the world I left behind.
If only you could see how lonely I am without my family,
And knowing they are not safe.
If only you could hear me out and listen to why I came.
If only you could feel the pain inside my chest.
If only you could see how many times I wake up in the middle of the night,
My blue bag to Nauru waiting at my door.
If only you could see how many dreams I have for my future.*

17 year old asylum seeker held at Christmas Island,
Without family and without any hope of a durable solution.

We light a candle for those who have been forced to flee the violence of their own countries, and who have experienced rejection in this land.

We light a candle for the pain they are suffering as a result of Government decisions and the political wrangling of our country's leaders.

We light a candle for our own sense of helplessness at this time and our desire for solidarity with our sisters and brothers.

We reflect on stories of exile

From Leviticus 19

You shall love the stranger as yourself, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt. I am the Lord, your God.

And from Matthew 2:13-15

When the Magi had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. 'Get up' he said 'take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him'. So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and fled to Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod.

We reflect on the voices of lament

Hear the desperation of the family trying to pull its remnants together after so many have been murdered.

Hear the heartbeat of the man escaping an assassin's bullet.

Hear the cries of a woman escaping politically motivated sexual violence.

Hear the frantic steps of the child whose dying parents have told her to flee.

Hear the screams of desperate people as their boat slowly sinks.

We reflect

As the voices of asylum seekers are silenced by fear and the pursuit of power

We hear so few voices of politicians who put the safety of asylum seekers first.

We hear so few voices of compassion on the radio waves.

We hear so few voices speaking of the people displaced by war and torture.

We hear so few strong international voices for a global strategy on asylum seekers.

The voices that speak for those desperate people on the sea are too quiet in our community and work places.

We reflect

As the voices of asylum seekers are silenced by fear and the pursuit of power

We long to see the public leaders who have compassion.

We long to find the public dreamers of justice.

We long to hear the public proclaimers of hope.

We long to overturn the actions done in our name.

We long to inspire our neighbourhoods to new attitudes.

We long to infect the public discourse with grace.

STAND WITH US

Calling all you thinkers, that you might understand
Calling all you dreamers, artists and schemers, you workers on the land
We're calling those of you who care, have other people in your life

Just listen if you can and stand with us tonight.

Calling all believers, school leavers, achievers
And those you leave behind
You sisters and you brothers, fathers and mothers
And others you may find
We're calling those of you who play, enjoy those moments of your life
But listen if you can and stand with us tonight.

...we're calling those who know of pain –
Have felt a sadness in your life
Please listen if you can and stand with us tonight.

STAND WITH US	East Timor, Kosovo
STAND WITH US	Sri Lanka, El Salvador
STAND WITH US	Chile, Ethiopia
STAND WITH US	China, Colombia

STAND WITH US	we dissent and we are tortured
STAND WITH US	we are brutalised and broken
STAND WITH US	we've lost our homes and families
STAND WITH US	Are our voices just a whisper
STAND WITH US	for justice and compassion
STAND WITH US	protection for our children
STAND WITH US	your brothers and your sisters
STAND WITH US	for a chance to live again!

STAND WITH US	Turkey, Eritrea
STAND WITH US	Russia, Kenya
STAND WITH US	Iran, Liberia
STAND WITH US	Tibet, Bulgaria

STAND WITH US

For our brothers and sisters whose homes are torched, whose children are scattered, who must turn down their eyes and fence their mouths, we pray:

God of compassion hear us

For those who stand in solidarity with asylum seekers and refugees, that their work will be recognised and supported: **God of compassion hear us**

For Church Leaders, that they will continue to show leadership in speaking out for justice and the rights of asylum seekers: **God of compassion hear us**

For political leaders, that the rights and dignity of all people will be uppermost in their consideration of policy: **God of compassion hear us**

For all of us, that our hearts may be open, our hands ready, and our words welcoming to those who have lost so much and need to start again: **God of compassion hear us**

FINAL BLESSING

May God bless you with a discontent...

...at easy answers, half truths and superficial relationships, so that you will live deeply within your heart. **Amen.**

May God bless you with anger...

...at injustice, oppression, abuse and exploitation of people so that you will work for justice, equality and Peace. **Amen.**

May God bless you with tears...

...to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation and war, so that you will reach out to comfort them, changing their path to one of joy. **Amen.**

May God bless you with the foolishness...

...to think you can make a difference, so that you will do the things that others tell you cannot be done. **Amen.**

Compassionate God, in your love and solidarity you call us to stand with those who are most vulnerable, especially asylum seekers who risk all to find protection and a secure future for their families. Hear our prayer and the unuttered cries of our hearts offered in the name of your son, Jesus, who was himself a refugee. **Amen.**

