Dear Parents and Guardians

No doubt we have all been moved by the flood of refugees in the Middle East. We cannot really imagine their plights.

We see crowds of refugees on boats and trains, as well as those in camps, and realise how shocking must be their home situations that they see the choice to flee as the only option. Many are being targeted as minorities in their own countries.

Fortunately, Australia now is going to offer safe refuge for thousands. However, these thousands are going to need care and places to live.

While it is likely to take some time for arrangements to be put in place, I invite Catholics to consider welcoming refugees into their homes on a temporary basis. At this point, all that is being asked for is an expression of interest. All we know for certain is that there will be a need.

Obviously, hosting one or more refugees will not be possible for everybody for a host of perfectly understandable reasons. Some, for example, may be away from their homes all day and unable to provide the personal support refugees will need. Others may be unwell or frail. However, I ask that all give the matter careful thought.

The Catholic community is much larger than parishioners who take part regularly in the worship and life of their parishes. So this invitation is extended to all Catholics, including those whose only current connection with the Church is that their children are in a Catholic school.

Please communicate my invitation to Catholic family members and friends who otherwise might not learn of it. We all need to remember Jesus' words: 'When I was a stranger, you made me welcome'. Anyone able to welcome a refugee welcomes Jesus.

At this point, I ask those willing to do so simply to fill in the Expression of Interest form attached. The form indicates an interest in hosting one or two refugees or even a family of refugees.

If your help is needed once the situation becomes clearer, you will be contacted by the appropriate Church body. Please note on the questionnaire any questions you have that would need answering before you could make a final decision on whether you can host refugees.

I conclude by asking that all Catholics pray for those currently being driven from their countries - and that the current Middle East turmoil be replaced by peace.

God bless you all

Bishop Gerard Holohan

14th September 2015
Expression of Interest in Hosting Refugees

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Please indicate by circling how many refugees you may be able to host temporarily:

- One Refugee ________________
- Two Refugees, or more (indicate number) ________________
- Couple (no children) ________________
- Family (indicate number) ________________

Please list below any questions you would need answered before you could make a decision to host one or more refugees. These would be put to the relevant organisation before they contact you, should your help be needed.

Please mail your confidential Expression of Interest to:
Bishop Gerard Holohan, Catholic Diocese of Bunbury, P O Box 2005, WA 6321

Thank you for your support