

OPENING A CONVERSATION ABOUT PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM



Since August 2017 the Diocese of Parramatta, led by the Social Justice Office in conjunction with the Sydney Alliance, Jesuit Refugee Service, House of Welcome, NSW Vinnies and CatholicCare Social Services, has been undertaking an Diocesan Journey: Walking with Refugees and People Seeking Protection. The journey responds to Bishop Vincent's invitation to Catholic communities to respond to their plight of people seeking protection with understanding and compassion.

The starting point for the Diocesan Journey in most parishes is a "table talk", supported and led by the Sydney Alliance in collaboration with the Diocese. The Sydney Alliance has been hosting these table talks since 2015, with thousands of people taking part.

What is involved?

The main activity is the "table talk" – a conversation inside a local community about and with people seeking asylum. Table talks take between 90 minutes and 2.5 hours. They emphasise respectful dialogue and mutual sharing of personal stories around values that are important to us. At each gathering asylum seekers or refugees are invited to share their story. Members also share their stories and to ask questions of an expert. The goal is to build solidarity, to find common ground in our shared values, and build the capacity of our communities to stand with people seeking asylum.

The Sydney Alliance and Diocesan Journey committee provide the following

- One or more asylum seekers / refugees who are prepared to share their story during table talks
- A suggested format for the conversation (with a focus on sharing stories and values).
- An expert to respond to participants' questions and reflections
- Someone to facilitate, or co-facilitate with a local leader if desired.

Participating organisations are asked to:

- Provide a venue and time to gather for the table talk
- Turn out members to take part in the table talk
- Meet at least twice with Sydney Alliance leaders beforehand to adapt the agenda to their community and values, and at least once afterwards for debriefing and follow up
- Identify and bring together a small group of leaders willing to run small groups at the table talk (with training and support from the Sydney Alliance).

This project is led by the Diocesan Journey Steering Committee, as well as the Sydney Alliance People Seeking Asylum Team. The Sydney Alliance is a non-partisan coalition of civil society organisations, including the Diocese of Parramatta.

To take part, contact us here:

Patrice Moriarty – Social Justice Coordinator

patrice.moriarty@parracatholic.org

8838 3413 or 0409 399 505

A SIGN OF SUPPORT FROM YOUR PARISH:



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PARRAMATTA

Another way we can show our support for refugees and asylum seekers is through advocacy.

You can sign and share the Catholics For Refugee Petition here: change.org/nooneleftbehind and you can participate through a visual sign of your parish's support, too.

The diocese is putting together photos from different parishes showing their support for refugees.

- Take a socially distanced photo with your parish priest and parishioners at your church with a sign of support for refugees, e.g. "Refugees welcome here" or "Holy Spirit Parish is for refugees".
- Share on your social media page and send a copy to patrice.moriarty@parracatholic.org



**is for
Refugees**

