



**Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year B)
Migrants and Refugee Sunday**

Homily

**By the Most Rev Bishop Don Sproxtton
Auxiliary Bishop of Perth**

**St Mary's Cathedral
Saturday 4 October, 2025**

Before I was called to be a Bishop, I was Parish Priest at St Gerard Majella Parish in Mirrabooka.

Refugees from Sudan had been arriving in Perth and they received help to adjust and rebuild as they moved into a new culture by the State government and the St Vincent de Paul Society in old buildings of flats in the north of our parish.

One evening, I had a visit from the eldest boy of one of the families. He was 16 years old and asked if he could be baptised. I listened to the story of his family. It was both heartbreaking and inspiring.

He told me that he, his mother and five siblings had been able to come to Australia. His father had been kidnapped, and they never saw him again. His mother somehow had kept the family together, through the horrors of living in a refugee camp in Egypt where the children grew up. The camp became a bedlam after sunset. The guards would leave for the sake of their own safety, leaving the refugees to their own devices to survive the night. The children witnessed unspeakable things.

He told me how happy they were now in a place of law and order and where they felt safe. He was thankful to God for answering the prayers of his family. Though his family was Catholic, there had not been the opportunity in the camp for him to receive the Sacraments.

There is a resonance of that family's experience with that of the prophet Habakkuk. The first reading today came from that prophet who complains to God and then hears the Lord's response. The prophet cries out, "How long, Lord?" he was living in a time of great upheaval, wars and the destruction of his nation. Complete devastation of the people and the land.

The answer of the Lord was "Write the vision down!" What was the vision? The Lord would send relief at the right time. They were called to be patient and to trust. As Christians, we discern that the moment of redemption and freedom for God's people came with the sending of the Son of God, at the right time. The hope was finally realised.



Pope Leo XIV, in his message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, outlines for us the same sort of challenges in our own day: “The current global context is sadly marked by wars, violence, injustice and extreme weather events, which force millions of people to leave their homelands in search of refuge elsewhere.” A new arms race, nuclear weapons, climate crisis and growing economic inequalities present us with “frightening scenarios and the possibilities of global devastation”.

Yet, the Holy Father does not believe that all is lost. There are reasons for hope.

“In a world darkened by war and injustice, even when all seems lost, migrants and refugees stand as messengers of hope. Those who have the courage to leave their homelands, the resilience to survive their challenging journeys and the strength to start life anew, can be for us ‘Missionaries of Hope’.”

And there are the other messengers of hope: those who receive the migrant and refugee in countries like Australia. We are called to be their receivers. We can do so when we see that we can offer a present and a future to them who are equally children of God with us.

The act of love that is expressed in the welcome we offer to the stranger is the reason for the hope in our hearts and it is the first step we take to make a better future together.