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MEDIA RELEASE

VINNIES URGES SUPPORT FOR REFUGEE JUSTICE ON PALM SUNDAY

The St Vincent de Paul Society is urging Australians to march for refugee justice on Palm Sunday.

'Justice for Refugees Palm Sunday rallies are an important opportunity to highlight community concerns about the Australian Government's cruel and harmful refugee and asylum seeker policies,' National President Mark Gaetani said.

'The Society has a long history of assisting vulnerable people and believes that all people seeking protection as refugees need to be treated fairly and with compassion.

'It was on this day that Jesus entered Jerusalem to complete his mission to "bring good news to the poor and to set captives free", through his suffering, death and resurrection,' Mr Gaetani said.

The Society has welcomed the Australian Government's announcement to end temporary protection for over 19,000 visa holders, enabling those on Temporary Protection Visas or Safe Haven Enterprise Visas to apply for a permanent Resolution of Status Visa.

'While Resolution of Status visa holders will be able to apply to sponsor family members through the migration program, restrictions are still in place for applications through the Special Humanitarian Program,' Mr Gaetani said.

'And the pathway for those still involved in the unfair 'fast track process' remains uncertain.

'More action is needed for about 10,000 people under Australia's care, who've been seeking our protection for a decade and who are still unable to do so in a fair and timely manner,' Mr Gaetani said.

The Society is calling on the Australian Government to:

- Implement a fairer process for all affected by the unjust fast-track process and provide an adequate safety net for all asylum seekers
- Resettle all people still subject to offshore processing and move people held offshore to Australia while they await resettlement
- Make detention a last resort and improve the living conditions of those that must be detained for security reasons
- Reform the family reunion process and expedite implementation of the increased humanitarian intake, with a minimum intake of 20,000 people in 2023-24.

Most of these actions will need action by the Australian Government in its 2023-24 Budget to be handed down on Tuesday 9 May.

Justice for Refugees Palm Sunday rallies will be held across Australia, with their locations and times shown on this Australian Refugee Network [website](#).

People unable to attend an event can support the call for Justice for Refugees by sending a letter, email or postcard to their local Member of Parliament or Senator.

Resource materials, including examples of letters, can also be found on the above webpage.

The St Vincent de Paul Society in Australia consists of 45,000 members and volunteers who operate on the ground through over 1,000 conferences located in individual parishes across the country.

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