Bible Study and Prayer:  
Supporting Refugees & Asylum Seekers  

Text: Matthew 25: 31-40

Internationally known Vietnamese teacher and author Thich Nhat Hanh says to the Christians ‘The only way to touch Jesus is to practise his teaching.’ This is exactly what Jesus is saying to his followers in Matthew 25, just before the Last Supper, the betrayal and the crucifixion.

Nothing could be clearer. The New Testament calls us to action, not just talking. Especially is this relevant in a secular, materialist culture like Australia. People are not interested in our doctrine or our criticisms. But they are impressed by our demonstrations of God’s love by our actions in welcoming strangers, feeding the hungry, supplying clothes for the poor.

Questions for group discussion:

1. Who were the strangers back in the First Century AD? And who are the strangers in your community?

2. In a relatively affluent society like Australia, are there really any poor, or people without clothes or houses?

3. Are these obligations just for individuals, or do you think congregations have responsibilities to act?

4. How do you respond to the current political stimulation of ‘fear of the stranger’ which lies behind Australia’s asylum seeker policies?

PRAYER: a litany for peace suitable for Sunday worship  
[from A Prayer Book for Australia page 194]

For the peace of the whole world, especially the Middle East, and for the welfare of the holy Church of God, let us pray to the Lord,

Lord, have mercy.

For peace among the leaders of the nations, and those in authority, let us pray to the Lord,

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of this city and this community, and for those who live in them in faith, let us pray to the Lord,

Lord, have mercy.

For deliverance for us from evil, strife and need, and especially for asylum seekers and refugees, let us pray to the Lord,

Lord, have mercy.
**PRAYER:** from an old Celtic liturgy of Hospitality: *(Stand and say together)*

We saw a stranger yesterday.  
We put food in the eating place,  
drink in the drinking place,  
music in the listening place.  
And with the sacred name of the Triune God,  
He blessed us and our house,  
Our cattle and our dear ones.

**PRAYER for Solidarity:**  
Introduction: May we continue to stand in solidarity with communities vulnerable to disasters, conflict and extreme poverty and those who come to our land.

**Let us turn to the South**  
I am the girl child who is not able to attend school.  
I am the refugee struggling to keep my culture alive.  
I am the youngster in Australia captured by the culture of consumerism.  
I am the asylum seeker imprisoned on Manus island.  
I am the indigenous boy with nothing to do.  
I am the mother fleeing domestic violence.  
I am the father sleeping rough after a marriage breakdown.

**ALL:** I AM YOUR SISTER. I AM YOUR BROTHER. We are one.

**Let us turn to the East**  
I am the father in the Solomon Islands living under a tarpaulin after my livelihood has been destroyed by floods.  
I am the young activist working with my community in the favelas of San Paulo.  
I am a teenager involved in street theatre educating the Salvadorian public about HIV.  
I am the disabled father seeking work.  
I am the farmer diversifying from dairy to olives to deal with the changing climate.  
I am the husband and wife in Samoa attending violence against women workshops.

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**Let us turn to the North**  
I am the family living in the rubbish dumps in Quezon City in the Philippines.  
I am the mother in Oecussi raising chickens and growing vegetables.  
I am the women on the Thai Burma border supporting young children.  
I am the girls from Bangladesh traded into sex slavery.  
I am the boy child sewing footballs for Australian sportsmen.  
I am the family in PNG struggling to cope with the ravages of HIV.  
I am the young man living with a disability learning hairdressing skills to set up a small business.

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**Let us turn to the West**  
I am the Tutsi women in Rwanda reclaiming my livelihood and life.  
I am the grandmother in Uganda raising my grandchildren.  
I am the internally displaced women living with HIV.  
I am a man in Tanzania building a water system with my community.  
I am a baby girl born into poverty.  
I am a former child soldier re-integrating into my village community.  
I am a teenage girl developing skills to earn a living.

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Further Study Guides and Discussion Papers on asylum seekers and refugees can be found on the Anglican Diocese of Southern Queensland website at https://anglicanchurchessq.org.au/dsrc-publications

- Study Guide booklet (six sessions): Asylum seekers and refugees: Scriptural, theological and ethical approaches.


- Individual Study Guide: Session Two: What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt? Coping with Change.