Media Release

Marist Brothers' Province of Australia

Marist Brothers' Australia calls on the Australian Government to protect and support those most vulnerable in the COVID-19 pandemic

"Dignity, freedom, respect and forgiveness must underpin our response to this crisis"

22 April 2020

The Provincial of the Marist Brothers has called for the support and protection of those most vulnerable in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Human compassion, dignity, freedom, respect and forgiveness have even greater resonance today as we fight this terrible disease", said Br Peter Carroll, fms, Provincial Marist Brothers Australia.

"Indeed they are guides for us all – community and government alike – in how we should respond in this crisis, least of all to those who are most vulnerable.

"On behalf of Marists across Australia I call on the Australian Government to act now to protect hundreds of thousands of vulnerable men, women and children left without support in the face of this pandemic.

"Whilst the Australian government has moved quickly to support many in our community in the face of the COVID19 - and they should be applauded for doing so – these actions have shone a light on the millions in our community left to fend for themselves.

"They include hundreds of thousands of vulnerable men, women and children across the country at risk of falling through the cracks in the response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

"1.5 million temporary visa holders in Australia are left without work, without a financial safety net, many without temporary accommodation and no access to basic services such as Medicare or free legal advice. And in the current circumstances it is impossible for most of them to return home.

"Equally the asylum seekers and refugees who have sought protection in Australia are profoundly vulnerable to COVID19 and the Marist Brothers support the call for them to be released from detention to protect them against this pandemic.

"How we care for and support the most vulnerable in our community is the test of our humanity in times of crisis", said Br. Carroll.

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