

'CRY FOR HELP' - PENTECOST HOMILY – 4 JUNE 2017
"TENS OF THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN HAVE BEEN KILLED".

As we hear stories from families resettled in Brisbane and Logan City, from Iraq and Syria, and as their children settle in our schools and neighbourhoods, what have they survived?

In this last week, on May 30th, **Stephen O'Brien from the United Nations** detailed the current **humanitarian and relief** situation in **Syria**, in his UN Statement.

[\[Statement to the Security Council on Syria New York, 30 May 2017\]](#)

A FEW QUOTES FROM STEPHEN O'BRIEN'S UN STATEMENT -

- *"Just last week, 30 children and women were gravely injured in a heinous attack by ISIL on besieged neighbourhoods in Deir ez-Zor as they were lining up for water. In addition, more than a hundred civilians, many of them women and children, have fallen victim, in recent weeks, to the escalating counter-ISIL airstrikes, particularly in the north-eastern governorates of Al-Raqqqa and Deir ez-Zor."*
- *"Millions more are in the line of fire, facing crushing poverty and alarming physical danger. Tens of thousands of children have been killed, and for those who have survived till today, the outlook remains bleak. Children have been forcibly detained, they have been tortured, subjected to sexual violence, forcibly recruited and in some cases executed."*
- *"Close to seven million children in Syria live in poverty. Nearly 1.75 million children remain out of school and another 1.35 million are at risk of dropping out. 7,400 schools –one in three across the country – have been damaged, destroyed, or otherwise made inaccessible. And even if the schools were intact, many would be unable to open, with almost one quarter of the country's teaching personnel no longer at their posts."*
- *"Outside Syria, hundreds of thousands of Syrian children are left to face an uncertain and traumatic future on their own; they have become stateless, abandoned by the world but for the generosity of neighbouring Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Turkey, as well as Egypt."*
- *"How are these children meant to function as adults? What future do these children have – illiterate, orphaned, starved, traumatized and maimed? What future does a country have when its next generation is a lost generation? For these suffering children, what's at stake isn't politics. It's their lives and their futures. It is their innocent voices, their suffering that need advocating."*

ON THIS CELEBRATION OF PENTECOST, THE GIFTING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, DO WE REALLY THINK THAT GOD WOULD WANT US TO BE SILENT ABOUT CHILDREN DYING?

IN OUR EXPERIENCE OF GOD'S LOVE, DO WE THINK THAT GOD WOULD IGNORE THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN?

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO US?

In today's First Reading, the Acts of the Apostles 2:1-11, we hear how the Holy Spirit

"...rested on each of them".

"All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability."

Verses 9-11 mention some of the ethnic groups witnessing the sharing of languages.

The Holy Spirit reaches out to the human family today across the world.

WHAT ABILITY HAS THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVEN US?

The Second Reading, 1st Corinthians 12:3-7, 12-13, unifies us across our cultures

"For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body

*- Jews as well as Greeks, slaves or free –
and we were all made to drink of one Spirit."*

Today's Gospel John 20:19-13 highlights

"As the Father has sent me, so I send you".

NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK

In this past week Australia has commemorated National Reconciliation Week.

On Monday an ecumenical service was held in our parish church.

Four Christian Indigenous speakers drew our attention to many issues that we need to face across Australia.

Murri Ministry coordinated the service. And we prayed. And we resolved to journey together.

SOUTH SUDAN

During the week we hear that Pope Francis is not going to South Sudan this year.

And we prayed for the people of South Sudan. Our prayer is at -

<https://www.facebook.com/stjosephsbrackenridge/posts/1525067740901135>

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

This weekend is our annual St Vincent de Paul Conference collection to help people in our local area. We heard the annual report about where our donations went from the previous 12 months.

+JOYFUL – FIRST COMMUNION

Today we have a parish group of children receiving First Communion.

The children are from many cultures.

They have been preparing for weeks.

Another group to come. Joyful.

+JOYFUL - LOVE

On Friday Brianna and Troy expressed their love for each other as they looked into each other's eyes and spoke their wedding vows in front of family and friends. Joyful.

+JOYFUL – SCHOOL CHILDREN

Earlier on Friday morning four classes of Year 2 students prayed at Mass for their families and teachers. And later shared in a special morning tea. Joyful.

SYRIAN CHILDREN CRY OUT FOR HELP

With so much happening, we might forget the tens of thousands of Syrian children killed. And so many more crying out for help.

God doesn't forget

“children have been forcibly detained, they have been tortured, subjected to sexual violence, forcibly recruited and in some cases executed.”

GOD DOESN'T FORGET THEM

THE GOSPEL REMINDS US THAT WE ARE SENT

A Syrian family brings up the gifts of bread and wine at Mass today.

HOW DOES THE HOLY SPIRIT PROMPT US?

HOW IS THE HOLY SPIRIT PROMPTING US TO REACH OUT TO THE PEOPLE OF SYRIA?

HOW IS THE HOLY SPIRIT PROMPTING US TO REACH OUT TO IRAQ AND YEMEN, TO NORTHERN NIGERIA, SOUTH SUDAN, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC) AND MANY OTHER AREAS?

AND TO THE PARISHIONERS HELD RANSOM IN THE SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES?

- During this next week some possible actions will be listed
- Meanwhile please share Stephen O'Brien's UN Statement on Syria with others

We have been gifted with the Holy Spirit in our lives to make a difference.

Let us pray about it and follow the prompts of the Holy Spirit wherever the Holy Spirit leads us.

This Pentecost let us take the time to pray about the children of Syria and ask God what we could do.

Amen.

Fr Gerry

[Fr. Gerry Hefferan – Cry for Help - Pentecost – 4 June 2017]

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/060417-day-mass.cfm>]

[Parish Facebook: <http://bit.ly/parishFacebook04062017>]

[Statement to the Security Council on Syria New York, 30 May 2017](#)

Today at our Mass, Fr. Gerry invites us to pray with the children of The Latin Parish St. Francis in Aleppo by Livestream from Aleppo, Syria – commencing 6pm Brisbane time.