

MEDIA RELEASE
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**Catholic Orders from across Australia call for Amnesty for the people in detention camps:
saying #BringThemHere!**

Sisters from Catholic religious orders across Australia today signed a statement calling on the Prime Minister to issue an amnesty for those suffering intolerable cruelty in Australia's offshore detention camps, and backed a call for a Summit on Solutions to take the politics out of refugee policy.

Sr Monica Cavanagh, Congregational Leader of the Sisters of St Joseph, said that the celebration of 150 years of the life and work of Saint Mary MacKillop, being celebrated here in Sydney this week, motivated Catholic Orders to do what Sister Mary would have done, which is to "ask that the people seeking asylum on Manus Island and Nauru, be brought here to Australia".

"In the context of the imminent closure of the Manus camp - announced today by the PNG and Australian Governments - the men on Manus must be granted this amnesty and brought to Australia, not to some other temporary or unsafe context", she said.

Speaking at Mary MacKillop Place in Sydney today, Sr Monica said "after people are brought here to safety, we fully support the call for a Summit on Solutions, so that the best alternatives can be thrashed out in a bipartisan way".

"We are making a personal appeal to Mr Turnbull and Mr Shorten: please put human dignity above politics by agreeing to work together."

Also speaking at the celebrations for Saint Mary MacKillop today, Misha Coleman, Executive Officer of the Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce, said that: "we don't accept the argument that it's impossible to bring people here for fear of the people smuggling trade re-starting."

"We can't wait for more children to be abused in the offshore camps for alternatives to be put in place. That's why Catholic Sisters from across Australia are calling for a one-off amnesty for people in the offshore centres-this is less than 2000 people!"

"Most of these people have already been found to be refugees. They have 'done their time' in the harshest possible conditions imaginable. Let's empty the camps!"

"We also don't accept that Australia has to turn people seeking asylum back to the countries from which they've fled, in order to have a sound policy framework.

"There are alternative solutions that are being ignored because of partisan debates. We need a Summit of Solutions now to force our leaders to put safety above politics.

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