



# Josephite Justice Office

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Josephites stand with multicultural Australia against ignorance and racism**

Josephites join with many Australians and all those concerned for justice and human rights in speaking out against the race politics and ignorance we have witnessed in our parliament this week.

“It is hard to understand how people who profess to stand for the best of our national values, as well as for Christian principles and human rights could speak in this way”, said Sister Monica Cavanagh, congregational leader of the Sisters of Saint Joseph. “We had thought at the end of World War II that the experience of the Holocaust had led the whole world community to a new humanity. It is devastating that we have regressed so far as a human community.”

The escalation of racist comments and conversations in recent months has been troubling. Inaccurate comments about Sudanese gangs in Melbourne, inappropriate behaviour and comments in Parliament about the burka, and the creeping normalisation of race politics have been truly hurtful to those on the receiving end of such racist behaviour. Even more however, they have surely and deliberately eroded the sense of inclusion, and the belief in a fair deal that we claim as fundamental Australian values.

Yesterday’s swift and concerned response by political, community and religious leaders, and the clear and moving gestures of friendship that we witnessed between politicians of differing religious and political persuasions, have given us a potential, new model of leadership. The visit by student leaders of Holy Spirit College, Lakemba, to the Lakemba mosque to express their solidarity with our Muslim brothers and sisters, embodies for all of us a different standard from that expressed by the Senator.

“The voices of reason and compassion in response to this distressing incident give us new hope in the face of the growing polarisation of our communities we have witnessed in recent months,” said Sr Monica. “It is our deep aspiration that such concern for justice and a fair go for all will become an acknowledged and clear norm for the future.”

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***The Josephite Justice Office*** is a ministry of the Congregations of the Sisters of Saint Joseph.  
*We educate, advocate and work for justice, for earth and people,  
especially those pushed to the edges.*