
Austria: Mgr. Glettler (Innsbruck), “our country should receive 100 refugee families from the island of Lesbos without ifs and buts”

Bishop Hermann Glettler of Innsbruck has made an appeal to open Austria's borders to refugees on the island of Lesbos, who are subjected to “unspeakable suffering due to the harsh winter season”. According to Mgr. Glettler, we cannot see why countless Austrians, political communities, parishes and church communities, solidarity movements and committed individuals should “buy into the Federal Chancellor's political position”. The Bishop issued a call to immediately let in 100 of the 250 families who have already been granted asylum “without ifs and buts”. Austria should “make its contribution to ending the distressing situation in Lesbos”. Every political calculation at the expense of extremely needy people is “a travesty of the whole Christian social policy”, said the prelate from Tyrol, recalling the latest alarming pictures from the emergency refugee camp of Kara Tepe on the island of Lesbos. “They dissuade anyone who has a glimmer of empathy from engaging in political games” and should shake people into accepting these families in Austria. For the Bishop, “humanitarian decency is a duty”, and those who find themselves in a situation of extreme emergency must be quickly and effectively assisted. “Indeed, this is not a debate on asylum, but on the need for immediate ‘humanitarian admission’ of those in need. The reception of 100 families would be a clear sign to the whole of Europe that it must act. Lesbos and the other Greek islands showing us such a misery reflect the failure of our common European refugee policy. This is no longer acceptable. The lives of thousands of people are at stake.

Gigliola Alfaro