

## BECOMING NEIGHBOURS

# World Refugee Day Prayer Service



*"I've met so many who have lost so much.  
But they never lose their dreams for their children or their desire to better our world.  
They ask for little in return only our support in their time of greatest need"*

*— UN Secretary-General, António Guterres*

## BACKGROUND

*According to the United Nation there are an estimated 58 million people displaced worldwide, 2.3 million asylum seekers, and 34 million people have been forcibly displaced within their own countries. António Guterres announced "These truly are alarming numbers. They reflect individual suffering on a huge scale and they reflect the difficulties of the international community in preventing conflicts and promoting timely solutions for them. The time is NOW to show that the global public stands with refugees." (Facts and figures: UNHCR assessed April 2016)*

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## GATHERING PRAYER:

Holy and merciful God, You have created us all in your image,  
We exist because of the radical welcome that You granted each one of us at birth,  
You have created us as refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants,  
You have called us to be your hands and feet in the world,  
to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked and set the captives free,  
God, hear our prayer for peace, for justice, for community,  
Hear our prayer for your will on earth to be as it is in heaven.  
Be with us now, God, empower us, guide us, sustain us and glorify us in your name. *Amen.*

**OPENING SONG:** "All Are Welcome" *Gather pg. 846 (Marty Haugen)*

Let us build a house where love can dwell  
and all can safely live,  
a place where saints and children  
tell how hearts learn to forgive.  
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,  
rock of faith and vault of grace;  
Here the love of Christ shall end divisions;  
All are welcome, all are welcome.  
All are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where prophets speak,  
and words are strong and true,  
where all God's children dare to seek  
to dream God's reign anew.  
Here the cross shall stand as witness  
and a symbol of God's grace;

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

**LEADER:** We give praise to our God who  
gathers us as one people. We seek to be  
one with refugees and immigrants.

**COMMUNITY:** Clear our eyes so that we  
may see the sufferings of displaced people.

**LEADER:** We welcome those whose lives  
have been dislocated by war and violence.

**COMMUNITY:** Open our ears so that we  
may hear the cries of those deep in despair.

here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:  
All are welcome, all are welcome.  
All are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where love is found  
in water, wine and wheat:  
a banquet hall on holy ground,  
where peace and justice meet.  
Here the love of God, through Jesus,  
is revealed in time and space;  
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us:  
All are welcome, all are welcome.  
All are welcome in this place.

**Welcome**  
Hospitality and God's gracious love to all

**LEADER:** We express our solidarity  
with all who search for a new life,  
a new home, a new promise.

**COMMUNITY:** Guide our feet that we may spread  
comfort; loosen our tongues that  
we might speak words of hope.

**LEADER:** Give us open hearts that we may be  
truly welcoming to the stranger in our midst,  
through our acts of hospitality  
so that all may be become to you. *Amen.*

**REFLECTION:** "10 Powerful Photos of Syrian refugees living across Canada" [Click Here](#)



**GOSPEL:** Matthew 25:35-45

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous\* will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, **whatever you did for one of these least of mine, you did for me.**'

Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.' Then they will answer and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?' He will answer them, 'Amen I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.'



**PERSONAL/COMMUNAL REFLECTION:**

*(Let us pause for a few moments and ask ourselves...)*

How is God speaking to me/us?

What is a blessing that I/we have received through an encounter with someone from another culture/land?

What is the request that God asks of me/us at this moment?

**PRAYER OF PETITION:** Response: Lord, hear our prayer.

For an end to the violence and poverty that displaces so many people from their homes and homelands, we pray. **R**

For migrant workers that they may labour and live in safe and just conditions, we pray. **R**

For the families and children of migrant workers that they be reunited, we pray. **R**

For our law-makers that they establish and enforce laws that protect the rights and dignity of everyone, especially those most vulnerable in our country, we pray. **R**

For employers and corporations that they choose the dignity and worth of each human person over profit and power, we pray. **R**

For our community and parishes that we may continue to serve those without homes and resources, and that we speak out for just immigration reform, we pray. **R**

## **OUR FATHER**

### **CLOSING PRAYER:**

We pray for your children, all over the world, displaced by human disaster.

We hear the cries of the suffering; we see the violence in our midst. You sent your Son to be the refuge of people on the move. We ask you to grant all refugees peace, protection, comfort and hope. Help us to recognize that whenever we welcome our sisters and brothers in your name, we welcome you. Teach us to recognize your presence in every human being. Bring us together as one family at the banquet table of your love. *Amen.*

### **SOLIDARITY OF ACTION**

- Pray for one refugee whom you have met
- Learn about refugee services in your community
- Celebrate the bonds across cultures and religions that make us stronger and more resilient.
- Read Pope Francis' "*Laudato Si'*", on the care of our common home"
- Stand #WithRefugees. [Click to pledge your support](#)

