



## World Refugee Day June 20, 2014

**"1 family torn apart by war is too many."**

June 20 World Refugee Day is a special day when the world takes time to recognize the resiliency of forcibly displaced people throughout the world.

While a refugee's journey begins with danger, it also begins with HOPE. Refugees flee their homelands not only because they fear persecution, but also because they have hope: they hope to find freedom from persecution, and safety and security for themselves and their families; they hope to be given a chance to start a new life and recover from past trauma.

On World Refugee Day, let's not forget that someday in the future we, too, could be knocking at a stranger's door hoping to find a safe and friendly shelter. We are called to extend to refugees the same kind of welcome we would like to receive if we were in their positions. As we are aware, in one minute, a family can be torn apart by war, a child can be separated from parents and a lifetime of hope can be destroyed. Yet in one minute we can also act – reuniting a family, protecting a child, providing HOPE.

(from [www.unhcr.ca/wrd/events-canada.htm](http://www.unhcr.ca/wrd/events-canada.htm))

## OPENING PRAYER

God our refuge, we hold in our minds and hearts all those who flee their homes and seek safety in a new place. We pray for the 11.4 million people who have become refugees outside their own countries. We pray for the 33.3 million people who have been displaced within their own countries. May we realize that, in our interconnected world, we are linked with all displaced persons by our common humanity.

Be with us, God our refuge, as we remember all refugees who long for home as they weep beside the rivers of exile. In your mercy, grant them new life.

With your grace, help us to embody with them your compassion, justice and hope. Help us to recognize one another as neighbour. AMEN

**SCRIPTURE:** Luke 7: 44 – 47

“Then turning toward the woman, Jesus said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little.” Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.”

## REFLECTION

This unnamed woman, in spite of her social status practices deliberate, far-reaching hospitality. Yet what is unique about this passage is not so much the exhibition of the unnamed woman’s hospitality, but rather the cause. The welcome displayed by the woman is the result of something unexpected – God’s radical forgiveness. Jesus discerns the forgiveness that she has already experienced. He sees her as one who has been freed from a great deal of moral debt. Yet, whereas the pardon has been granted by God prior to this encounter, the forgiveness only becomes fully realized during her interaction with Jesus. This radical welcome has a circular effect: because she is forgiven, she extends welcome, and her ability to welcome becomes her salvation.

God’s word in this Gospel text is that forgiveness is the source of our own ability to welcome others. Radical welcome, in this context, is based on having a relationship with God – one that empowers us to be vulnerable, take risks and welcome the other. In the process, we open ourselves up to being transformed, and like the unnamed woman, we are able to “show great love.” (7:47) According to this passage, salvation occurs at the intersection of forgiveness and hospitality, restoring the relationship between divine initiative and human response.

*‘Radical welcome... is based on having a relationship with God – one that empowers us to be vulnerable, take risks, and welcome the other.’*

Through God’s unconditional forgiveness, we are empowered to bestow God’s gift of radical welcome to our brothers and sisters who have been displaced through persecution and violence.

*(Church World Service – World Refugee Day 2013)*

Refugee  
Week



## PERSONAL/COMMUNAL REFLECTION:

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

How is God speaking to me/us?

As people of God who have been blessed with the gift of God’s radical forgiveness, how can I/we practise radical welcome?

What is the request that God is asking of me/us?

## PRAYERS OF PETITION

(for whom shall we pray - - -)

### OUR FATHER

#### ONE STEP TO TAKE:

**OFFER TO BE A COMPANION**  
with Becoming Neighbours.

**VIEW U.N. VIDEO**  
**ANGELINA JOLIE**

*"Asks us to do 1 thing"*

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=v5Z4SmRiaX0&list=UUXXD082fQGZ-1EI22YhRm-w&index=7&feature=plcp](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v5Z4SmRiaX0&list=UUXXD082fQGZ-1EI22YhRm-w&index=7&feature=plcp)

**PRAY FOR ONE REFUGEE**  
whom you have met.

**VIEW THE EDUCATIONAL FILM**  
*"6 Voices for 6 Decades"* Intimate portrait of six compelling refugee stories spanning six decades.  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pk34s6GOZ7Y](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pk34s6GOZ7Y)

## CLOSING HYMN: Be Not Afraid

You shall cross the barren desert,  
But you shall not die of thirst.  
You shall wonder far in safety  
Though you do not know the way.  
You shall speak your words in foreign lands  
And all will understand.  
You shall see the face of God and live **R:**

**Be not afraid**  
**I go before you always;**  
**Come follow me**  
**And I will give you rest.**

If you pass through raging waters in the sea  
You shall not drown.  
If you walk amid the burning flames  
You shall not be harmed  
If you stand before the pow'r of hell  
And death is at your side  
Know that I am with you through it all. **R:**

Blessed are the poor  
For the kingdom shall be theirs  
Blest are those who weep and mourn  
For one day, they shall laugh  
And if the wicked insult and hate you  
All because of me,  
blessed, blessed are you. **R:**

## CLOSING PRAYER: OUR LADY OF REFUGEES

Mother, who heard your child whimper  
Beneath your thin blue shawl,  
Our aching hearts cry out to you.

Mother, whose Egyptian flight preceded all of these,  
Guide all refugees in faith and hope beneath familiar stars.

Our Lady of Refugees,  
help us to recognize one another as neighbour,  
intercede with Jesus, your son, for us. AMEN

