



BECOMING NEIGHBOURS
Together in Ministry for a Better Toronto

Proud to Protect Refugees in Canada

Refugee Rights Day 2013

“The Vocation of a Protector ... it means building sincere friendships in which we protect one another in trust, respect, and goodness. In the end, all creation has been entrusted to our protection, and all of us are responsible for it.”

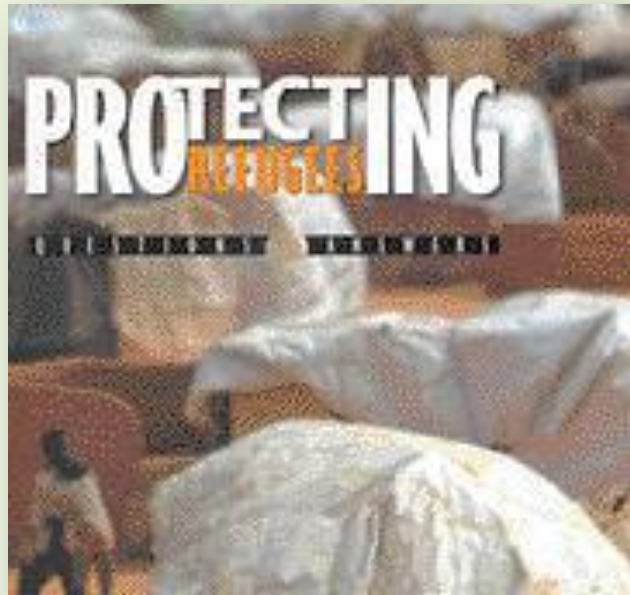
(Be Protectors of God’s Gifts--Pope Francis)

Song of Welcome:

“Like a Shepherd” (Glory and Praise, p. 66)

Call to Prayer:

Loving God, Source of all protection, be with us now as we join together in prayer for refugees worldwide. We bring before you all those who long for an encounter with someone they can trust, those who yearn for a safe home where life is lived in freedom and peace. Inspire and bless our time together, that we may discern and act with courageous solidarity.



May our actions as Canadian citizens always reflect a sense of commitment and pride to protect refugees.

Through Jesus we pray, Amen.

Signs of the Times:

Following recent changes to Canada's refugee determination system, it may be tougher to protect refugees in Canada. Especially with regards to the health of refugees, recent changes to the program have created complex categories with different levels of access to federally funded health care. The severity of the risks to the health of refugees has been raised by health professional themselves who have been moved to question and challenge the disappearance of policies reflecting much needed compassion and care. (<http://ccrweb.ca/files/afhreporten.pdf>)



Meditation:

1. The Inaugural Homily of Pope Francis – The Vocation of Being a Protector
www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130319_omelia-inizio-pontificato_en.html
2. Philippians 2:6–11 – Jesus’ humility, emptying and gift of self for our salvation is a model for Christian service.
3. Daniel Groody C.S.C. – *“Dying to Live: Theology, Migration, and the Human Journey.”*
<http://kellogg.nd.edu/faculty/fellows/dgroody/articles/REFLECT1GROODY.pdf>
(DVD resource available through Becoming Neighbours’ office)

Questions for faith sharing:

1. In his inaugural address Pope Francis wrote: “Saint Joseph appears as a strong and courageous man, a working man, yet in his heart we see great tenderness.” *How can we, like St. Joseph, combine strength and courage with tenderness in our efforts to protect refugees?*
2. To be protectors we must keep watch over ourselves: “Being protectors, then, also means keeping watch over our emotions, over our hearts, because they are the seat of good and evil intentions: intentions that build up and tear down!” *What aspects of your life do you need to watch over in order to be a faithful protector of others?*

3. Philippians 2:6–11 is a key Easter text. Jesus humbled himself for us. *How can we empty ourselves (e.g. of pride, fear, busyness, ignorance) to reach out to the refugees in our midst?*

Prayers of Intention:



Final Blessing:

As you cleave to me in love, I will deliver you;
I will protect you, who call upon my Name.
When you call to me, I will answer you;
I will be with you in times of trouble,
I will rescue you and reverence your life.
All through the years, I will dwell in your heart,
as Loving Companion Presence, forever. Amen
(Psalm 91 adapted by Nan C. Merrill)

Suggestions for Action

- Share the stories of refugee contributions
- Raise refugee voices
- Learn about the culture and background of a refugee in your community.
- Promote positive messages about refugees
- Use the 'proud to protect refugees' slogan for Refugee Rights Day activities
- Invite other organizations to declare that they are 'proud to protect refugees'
- Adopt the 'Proud to Protect Refugees' slogan and theme for activities
- Keep refugees and those who provide support to them in your daily prayers.

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**Becoming Neighbours - 2685 Kingston Road Toronto, ON M1M 1M4
416.267.4817 . jam@becomingneighbours.ca . www.becomingneighbours.ca**