

Dear Friends, ¶

As the blessing of cards, seasonal wishes and people steadily flow through our door, one thing is clear: *generous surrender makes possible the birth of Christ in our lives.* This is best witnessed in the profound stories of Mary, the Shepherds, the Magi, and of the refugees who enter our lives—all demonstrate how surrendering fear, doubt, and uncertainty open up the space needed for the “Christ life” to be born. ¶



In the stories and experiences that refugees share with us, we see the true meaning of “surrender”. With great trust they enter into a new life, creating a new home in a new land, at tremendous cost. The December 2016 *Maclean’s* article “[The First Flight](#)” conveys the stories of some of the first Syrian refugees to arrive in Canada last December. We read of the sorrow and loss of leaving everything behind, but also of the new hope for peace and safety in Canada. ¶

*Boudakian’s story captures this dialectic tension of surrender and hope: “I didn’t realize I was going to have all these sad feelings as I was leaving. You can’t really explain what you feel. You want to be stable in your life, to go to the place you think is going to be your country—your home—but you don’t realize that you have to say goodbye to the friends you made and the life you got used to.”* And yet the actions of Mariana’s son embody the profound truth of what surrender entails: *“We were with our daughter and our son, 8 and 4. Before we left Lebanon, we had given all our stuff to other people, including my son’s toys. When he saw that, he cried, but he took his favourite small car, a yellow one, and put it in his jacket. Nobody knew until we went through security at the airport and they searched everything. They found his car in his pocket.”* ¶

We do not lose who we are but the richness of our past births into an unfolding future. ¶

*Refugees today are the human face of Mary’s FIAT. ¶*

We believe that the ministry of Becoming Neighbours is another *FIAT* experience— one where 20 supporting religious congregations, who by surrendering their separateness to build a collaborative joint apostolic ministry, outreach, have echoed a powerful and collective *FIAT*. This *Fiat* has brought light and solidarity to hundreds of refugees and newcomers struggling daily to navigate the dark, unfamiliar paths of Canadian society. ¶

May we, too, embrace with JOY the true surrender which gives way to a *FIAT* for God. ¶

*With you in the light and solidarity of Christ’s birth, ¶*

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