

To Our Dear Becoming Neighbours Community,

Greetings of Summer One and All!

These last few months, we have had the privilege of welcoming and accompanying many government sponsored Syrian refugees sponsors many of whom are of Muslim faith. In walking with them, these families have extended incredible hospitality to us by opening their homes and by honouring us not only with food and drink but even more so with the gift of their presence. They have expressed thankfulness and appreciation for the welcoming Canadian people they have encountered and have expressed excitement and eagerness about learning English and beginning a new life in Toronto. Their children are happy and playful and talk about how much they love going to school; some of whom have never previously had the opportunity to do so. These families have generously shared their stories with us speaking of long journeys through dangerous circumstances and of family members who still remain in the midst of wars. Though we have not known each other for long we already feel like friends. We are uncovering a common ground in our mutual valuing of family, faith and the practice of hospitality. *Together we are on the journey of becoming neighbours!*



It is in this spirit of the grace of the journey of encounter that we share with you that later in September, Pope Francis will launch the “*Share the Journey*” campaign, a two-year program to promote encounters between people on the move and people living in the countries they are leaving, passing through or the countries into which they will arrive. Encountering refugees and listening to their stories — and having them listen to the stories

of people in their host communities — means that “the walls people have erected in their minds and hearts should begin to fall,” said Michel Roy, secretary general of Caritas Internationalis. *“You may be afraid of refugees as a large group of people coming in, but when you encounter a refugee, and then a new and different vision emerges”.*

As we too have been and are privileged to experience in the ministry of Becoming Neighbours, listening to the stories of one another makes it clear that we are all human beings. Encountering and receiving the story of “the other”, something mutually shifts within hearts.

As summer continues to progress along its path of long, hot, hazy days,
may all of us be revitalized by the Spirit who stirs our hearts to overflow with COMPASSION
on our journey of becoming neighbours!

With solidarity for the journey,

Lois Anne Bordowitz, FCJ

Tina Solomon

Peter McKenna, SCJ