

## BECOMING NEIGHBOURS

### United Nations World Refugee Day Prayer Service



Majid dreams of an education for his children



Amal hopes to inspire other refugees to succeed in their new countries.

*"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

*"Migration today is not a phenomenon limited to some areas of the planet. It affects all continents and is growing into a tragic situation of global proportions. Today, according to the United Nation there are an estimated 68.5 million people around the world who have been displaced from their homes. Among them are nearly 25.4 refugees, over half of whom are under the age of 18 years. Every 15 minutes, a family is forced to flee their homeland. These alarming numbers reflect individual suffering on a huge scale and the international difficulties in preventing conflicts and promoting timely solutions for them.*

*The time is NOW to show that you as a member of the global public stands with refugees."*

---

#### GATHERING PRAYER

God of our Wandering Ancestors,  
long have we known  
that Your heart is with the refugee:  
that You were born into time  
in a family of refugees  
fleeing violence in their homeland,  
who then gathered up their hungry  
child and fled into alien country.  
Their cry, Your cry,  
resounds through the ages:  
WILL YOU LET ME IN?"

Give us hearts that break open  
when our brothers and sisters turn to us  
Then surely all these things will follow:  
Ears will no longer turn deaf to their voices.  
Eyes will see a moment for grace instead of a threat.  
Tongues will not be silenced but will instead advocate.  
And hands will reach out—  
working for peace in their homeland,  
working for justice in the lands where they seek safe haven.  
Lord, protect all refugees in their travels.  
May they find a friend in us and so make us worthy  
of the refuge we have found in you. AMEN

*(Prayer courtesy of Catholic Relief Services)*

**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.*



*"Rumichaca, border of Colombia with Ecuador. Laila , three years old sitting on the shoulders of her father Jose. Jose is a fisherman from Venezuela, now travelling with his wife and two daughters to Quito". © UNICEF/Santiago Arcos*

**Review "Venezuelan Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan"**

**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...)*

Share an experience of welcoming a newcomer or of you being one who has been welcomed into a different cultural reality.

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

What is the request that God asks of you 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 an end to human trafficking, that the dignity of all God's children will be acknowledged and protected, we pray to the Lord. **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 continue to serve those without homes and resources and speak out for just immigration reform, we pray. **R**

## OUR FATHER

### CLOSING PRAYER

Gracious loving God,

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 welcome, protect, promote and integrate migrants and refugees.

Bring us together as one family at the banquet table of Your love. *Amen.*

### SOLIDARITY OF ACTION

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

