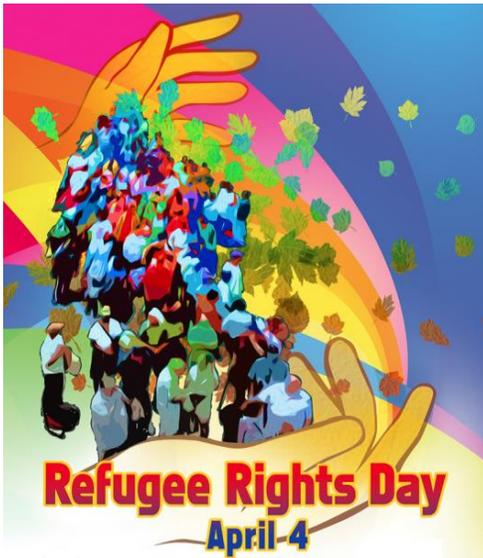


Prayer Service to Commemorate Refugee Rights



“REFUGEE RIGHTS DAY commemorates the April 04, 1985 Supreme Court Singh Decision – that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms protects the right of refugee claimants in Canada to life, liberty and the security of person, and that claimants are therefore entitled to an oral hearing. Yet, as we celebrate this anniversary, the one nagging image that continues to haunt us is the reflection of refugees who continue to endure in silence because of social resistance to recognize the anguish, isolation and vulnerability of refugees or the breaking of the promise that Canada is indeed a safe haven for those who are persecuted. On April 04, REFUGEE RIGHTS DAY let us recognize that three decades since the Singh Decision, we must continue our active stand in the fight for the basic human rights of our refugee sisters and brothers.”

GATHERING SONG: [“Gather Us In”](#) CBW III # 587

OPENING PRAYER:

Gracious God,
You called Sarai and Abram to find a home in a new land.
You welcomed the outsider and made them family.

We know their story, for it is our story.
Our families, many of them,
fled violence and oppression on every continent.
And You gave us Your own Son as a refugee from violence.

Following Your example, help us
make the story of the immigrant, the slave,
the refugee, and outsider part of our own story.

Today, your children still seek new homes, long for freedom,
hope for welcome and need protection.
Help us, most gracious God, to recognize one another as neighbour. Amen



SCRIPTURE: RUTH 1:7-19

Naomi set out from the place where she had been living, she and her two daughters-in-law, and they went on their way to go back to the land of Judah. But Naomi said to her daughters-in-law, *“Go back each of you to your mother’s house.”* They said to her, *“No, we will return with you to your people.”* But Naomi said, *“Turn back, my daughters, why will you go with me?”*



Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth said, *“Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die— there will I be buried.*

May the LORD do thus and so to me, and more as well, if even death parts me from you!”

So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem.”

PERSONAL/COMMUNAL REFLECTION:

- Listening to the story of Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah, what thoughts and feelings surfaced within you?
- Ruth left her homeland and kin behind to enter a foreign land and culture. Today, how does her courage inspire you to welcome refugees?
- What is the connection between the story of Ruth and the stories of refugees whom you have encountered?

RESPONSE FOLLOWING REFLECTION: (“[THE SERVANT SONG](#)” GATHER #669)

Brother, sister let me serve you.
Let me be as Christ to you.
Pray that I might have the grace
To let you be my Christ-light, too.

We are pilgrims on a journey.
We are [companions] on the road.
We are here to help each other
Walk the mile and bear the load.

I will hold the Christ-light for you
In the night time of your fear.
I will hold my hand out to you;
Speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping.
When you laugh, I’ll laugh with you.
I will share your joy and sorrow
Till we’ve seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven,
We shall find such harmony
Born of all we’ve known together
Of Christ’s love and agony.



EVERY HUMAN HAS RIGHTS

Suggestions for Action

- Learn about the culture and background of a refugee in your community. See [Canadian Council for Refugees](#)
- View the documentary "[Oh Mercy](#)", the ministry of Sr. Norma Pimentel, MJ
- We are **better together** economically, socially and culturally when we welcome refugees in our communities. [We know it. Let's share it.](#)
- [Call](#) on the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship to support a robust resettlement program.
- Keep refugees and those who provide support to them in your daily prayers.

CALL TO ACTION:

The time is here, the time is now.
We can change things.
Give the earth your dream for harmony;
she is waiting for you, waiting for me.



Show the earth you care about her future,
melt the walls of hate and fear that keep us apart.
Believe we can live together as friends of the earth.

So be the reason, be the hope for others
to believe that the earth is meant for
beauty, goodness and peace,
and that our God of love is God of the Earth's one family.
(Kathy Sherman, CSJ)

Call to action:

What is one action God is inviting you to undertake?

OUR FATHER

FINAL BLESSING:

GRACIOUS GOD, NO ONE IS A STRANGER TO YOU.
In Your providential kindness, watch over refugees, all those
separated from their loved ones and those who have had to flee
home to seek a better life for themselves and their families.

Bring them safely to the place where they long to be and together
may we be the Christ-light for others and for our earth.

We ask Your blessing through Jesus, the Risen One. Amen.

