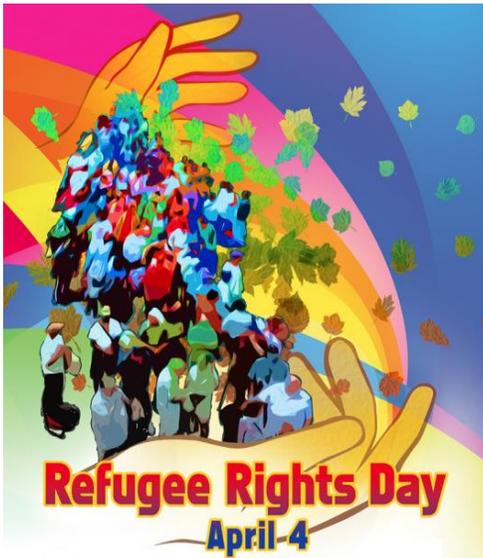


Prayer Service to Commemorate Refugee Rights



"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: [Solidarity](#) with Ukraine – Andrea Bocelli sings in St. Peter's Square

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



REFLECTION: MARTIN NIEMÖLLER,

“FIRST THEY CAME FOR THE SOCIALISTS,
AND I DID NOT SPEAK OUT—BECAUSE I WAS NOT A SOCIALIST.
THEN THEY CAME FOR THE TRADE UNIONISTS,
AND I DID NOT SPEAK OUT— BECAUSE I WAS NOT A TRADE UNIONIST.
THEN THEY CAME FOR THE JEWS, AND I DID NOT SPEAK OUT—BECAUSE I WAS NOT A JEW.
THEN THEY CAME FOR ME—AND THERE WAS NO ONE LEFT TO SPEAK FOR ME.”



What is happening with and to the people and land of Ukraine
is just the latest moment in our history of violence, war and forcibly displaced people.

Were we silent when it happened in the DR Congo because it was in Africa and the people are Black? Were we silent when it happened in the Middle East: in Syria, Afghanistan, Yemen because people are Brown and many Muslim? Are we now feeling disturbed and even outraged because the people in Ukraine are White, mainly Christian and situated in the heart of Europe?

This must be an **awakening**: we are all called to be sisters and brothers with and for each other!

PERSONAL/COMMUNAL REFLECTION:

- Hearing and listening to what is happening to forcefully displaced people throughout our world, what is most clear to me at this moment is ...

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](#)
- Attend Monday April 04 1:00-2:30pm [Refugee Rights Day online event](#) with speakers: Loly Rico, MP Arif Virani and MPP Bhutla Karpoche.
- 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 respect the right to refuge—by putting an end to the Safe Third Country Agreement

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 all forcefully displaced
people, all those separated from their loved ones and all those
who have had to flee war and violence to seek safety and freedom
for themselves and for 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.

