

BECOMING NEIGHBOURS



THEME FOR UNITED NATIONS WORLD REFUGEE DAY 2024: "FOR A WORLD WHERE REFUGEES ARE WELCOMED"

Let us come together to celebrate the strength and courage of those who have been forced to flee their home countries due to conflict or persecution. It's a time to raise awareness about the rights, needs, and dreams of refugees, emphasizing solidarity and support for their well-being (UNHCR). Let us stand together and show compassion for those seeking safety and a better future.

BACKGROUND

"Whoever, wherever, whenever – everyone has the right to seek safety.

Whoever they are, people forced to flee should be treated with dignity. It is non-negotiable: seeking safety is a human right. Wherever they come from, people forced to flee should be welcomed. Whenever people are forced to flee, they have a right to be protected.

Whatever the threat – war, violence, persecution – everyone deserves protection.

WORLD REFUGEE DAY celebrates the strength and courage of people who have been forced to flee their home country to escape conflict or persecution."

(Source: UNHCR: World Refugee Day)

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?"

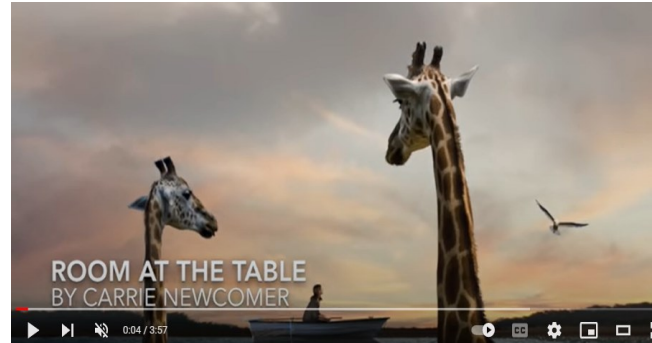
Give us hearts that break open
when our sisters and brothers turn to us
Then surely all these things will follow:
Ears will no longer turn deaf to their voices
Eyes will see a moment for grace instead of a threat
Tongues will not be silenced but will instead advocate.
And hands will reach out—
working 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: [Room at the Table - Carrie Newcomer](#)

*“No matter who you are, no matter where you're from
There is room at the table for everyone
Here and now we can be, the beloved community,
There is room at the table for everyone*

*There is room for us all
And no gift is too small
There is room at the table for everyone
There's enough if we share
Come on pull up a chair
There is room at the table for everyone”*



CALL TO WORSHIP

LEADER: We give praise to our God who gathers us as one people. We seek to be one with refugees.

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.

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 may all be one in you. *Amen.*

CELEBRATING WORLD REFUGEE DAY



Commit to support the four rights of refugees: the right to stay, the right to safe passage, the right to welcome and belonging, and the right to return.

POPE'S PRAYER INTENTION JUNE 2024



Pope Francis asks us to pray for migrants fleeing from war or hunger, forced to undertake journeys fraught with danger and violence, and invites us to tear down the walls in our hearts and **TO NURTURE A CULTURE OF WELCOME.**

GOSPEL: LUKE 14: 12-14

"Then Jesus said to his host, 'When you give a lunch or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your sisters or rich neighbours, in case they invite you back and so repay you. No; when you have a party, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; then you will be blessed.'"

*"To be a refugee is to have suffered trauma. We can see it in the eyes of people who have fled from Ukraine and Afghanistan. They have suddenly lost home, lost security, lost employment, lost neighbourhood. Many have also suffered from physical and mental illness as a result of this trauma and because of harsh treatment in the nations in which they have sought protection. Trauma results from abruptly broken connections. Healing comes from the gentle re-making of connections. For refugees it comes from hospitality, from welcome, from friendship, from assurance of food, housing and medical care, from the possibility of return to one's home or to find a new home, from the possibility of beginning a new life. Trauma arises when we are treated as things of no value, fit only to be broken and discarded. **HEALING COMES WHEN WE ARE TREATED AS PERSONS WITH A UNIQUE VALUE, AS BROTHERS AND SISTERS.**" (Australian Catholics Education Hub)*



PERSONAL/COMMUNAL REFLECTION:

(Let us pause for a few moments and ask ourselves...)

Revisit 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: (R)esponse: LORD, HEAR OUR PRAYER.

Leader: God of love and compassion: may we always recognize your spirit:

- in the refugee family, seeking safety from violence; **R**
- in the migrant worker, bringing food to our tables; **R**
- in the asylum-seekers, seeking justice for their families; **R**
- in the unaccompanied child, traveling in a dangerous world. **R**

ALL: Give us hearts that break open to encounter our sisters and brothers.
Give us hearts that no longer turn deaf to their voices in times of need.

Give us hands that work for a world of justice, inclusion, equity and dignity for ALL
until our "Common Home" is safe and secure.

(Adapted from Jesuit Resource)

OUR FATHER

CLOSING PRAYER

We see and hear, O God,
the suffering of your children who long for a safe and secure space.
May we remember them in our prayers,
and through our acts of hospitality may we all be one in You.
As your family returned from the exile of Egypt,
grant all refugees and displaced people
a return to the security of a home.
We ask you this in Christ's name. Amen.

(Source: Center of Concern)

ACTION(S) OF SOLIDARITY

- * Pray for one refugee whom you have encountered
- * Reach out and meet a refugee who lives in your neighbourhood.
- * Learn about refugee services in our community. See [UNHCR Canada](#)
[A glimpse into the lives and achievements of the one million refugees who arrived in Canada since 1980.](#)
- * [Walk a Mile in My Shoes Simulation](#)
- * Be active promoters of peace where you find yourself expressing solidarity with all victims of climate change, violence and war.

