

Day of Prayer for Refugees and Migrants

forced like
JESUS CHRIST
to flee



In the Church's history, many popes have referred to the Holy Family when speaking to the care for refugees and migrants. Pope Pius XII in his apostolic constitution, *Exsul Familia Nazarethana* (1952) wrote:

"The émigré Holy Family of Nazareth, fleeing into Egypt, is the archetype of every refugee family."

Pope Francis has drawn our attention back to the Holy Family when discussing migrant and refugee issues. He likens the Holy Family's experience of fleeing to Egypt to the journey that countless refugees and migrants must take. Much like the experience of the child Jesus from the persecution from King Herod, Pope Francis reminds us that "half of today's refugees in the world are children, blameless victims of human injustice" (*Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to Performers and Organisers of the Christmas Concert, 2018*).

Saint Joseph as the special patron of all those forced to leave their native lands because of war, hatred, persecution and poverty.

In Pope Francis' apostolic letter *Patris Corde* (2020) on the 150th anniversary of the proclamation of St Joseph as patron of the universal Church, Francis proclaimed it to be the Year of St Joseph and considered Joseph to be "the special patron of all those forced to leave their native lands because of war, hatred, persecution and poverty."

Francis describes St Joseph as a man on a journey as he was instructed by an angel in a dream to take Mary and Jesus and flee to Egypt (Matthew 2:13-23). Francis reaffirms Joseph's courage in how God entrusted Joseph with the most precious treasures of our faith – Jesus Christ and Mary his Mother.

With millions of displaced persons in the world, we see that there are countless modern-day Josephs who have fled their home alongside their families. Most especially in this Year of St Joseph, we look to Jesus' earthly father as an example of complete trust and courage.

Caritas Internationalis' Share the Journey

In September 2017, Caritas Internationalis launched their global campaign on the culture of encounter in the context of global migration, named *Share the Journey* (STJ). At the heart of STJ was Pope Francis' call for building a culture of encounter. The focus of the campaign has been for Caritas member organisations, including Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand, to run initiatives together with migrant and former refugees to strengthen the bonds within the communities. The 4 yearlong campaign promoted hope and the possibility of unity with migrants and refugees on a personal, community and global level encouraging concrete action in favour of migrants and refugees.

On this Day of Prayer for Refugees and Migrants 2021, Caritas Internationalis are closing this campaign. To find out more on STJ and the legacy it has left behind, check the official STJ website at: <http://journey.caritas.org/>.