



I, too, will...tear off a tender shoot, And plant it on a high and lofty mountain.
Ezekiel 17:22



DAY OF PRAYER FOR REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

17 June 2012

Asylum seekers, who fled from persecution, violence and situations that put their life at risk, stand in need of our understanding and welcome, of respect for their human dignity and rights, as well as awareness of their duties.

Pope Benedict XVI: *Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 2012*

10.5 million people are currently recognized as refugees worldwide. These are people who have crossed borders to escape persecution because of their race, religion, political belief or social group.

More than twice as many – 27.5 million people – currently live as Internally Displaced People. Many have fled their homes for very similar reasons to refugees, but have not crossed an international border.

Fewer than one percent of the world's recognized refugees will be resettled to a third country. New Zealand accepts 750 refugees each year for resettlement from the places where they first sought asylum. We also accept a very small number of asylum seekers each year. Both quota refugees and asylum seekers are refugees under the Refugee Convention.

Day of Prayer for Refugees and Migrants, Sunday 17 June 2012

The New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference set a Day of Prayer for Refugees and Migrants as close as possible each year to World Refugee Day on 20 June. This year, the Day of Prayer falls on Sunday 17 June.

The liturgical readings for this year's Day of Prayer for Refugees and Migrants speak to us of the experience of replanting and growth, of seeds being sown and springing up from the soil, of tiny seeds becoming trees large enough to shelter others. There is a clear metaphor for the replanting of lives, and the contribution made by former refugees now living in Aotearoa New Zealand who are able to put down roots and grow into new roles as valued neighbours, colleagues, friends and citizens.



Photo and story: Refugee Services

Naing Aung arrived from Myanmar (Burma) with a diploma of agriculture from his home country and a strong desire to contribute to his new community, but little spoken English. He is working with Porirua City Council's Parks and Reserves department, who are now partnering with Refugee Services' Pathways to Employment programme to assist former refugees towards employment.

Liturgical notes

Readings for the Day of Prayer for Refugees and Migrants, 17 June 2012: *Liturgical Year B, Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time.* The readings for Sunday 17 June share images of the Kingdom of God as a replanted shoot, as a flourishing tree, and as a tiny mustard seed that grows into a plant offering shelter to others.

First reading: *Thus says the Lord GOD: I, too, will take from the crest of the cedar, from its topmost branches tear off a tender shoot, And plant it on a high and lofty mountain.* Ezekiel 17:22-24

Psalm: *The just shall flourish like the palm tree, shall grow like a cedar of Lebanon. Planted in the house of the LORD, they shall flourish in the courts of our God.* Psalm 92

Gospel: *[The kingdom of God] is like a mustard seed that, when it is sown in the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on the earth. But once it is sown, it springs up and becomes the largest of plants and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the sky can dwell in its shade.* Mark 4:27-34

Prayer of the Faithful: *Please feel free to choose from these or to write your own*

We pray for all those forced to leave their homes because of fear and violence. May New Zealanders always offer welcome and shelter to those in need. Lord hear us, *Lord hear our prayer*

We pray for those who work to support the resettlement of refugees and migrants. May their work be recognised and supported. Lord hear us, *Lord hear our prayer*

We pray for Church Leaders, that our Pope, Bishops, Catholic agencies and members of religious communities will continue to show leadership in speaking out for the rights of refugees and migrants. Lord hear us, *Lord hear our prayer*

We pray for political leaders currently considering immigration legislation. May the rights and dignity of human beings be uppermost in their considerations. Lord hear us, *Lord hear our prayer*

REFLECTIONS from Pope Benedict's *Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 2012*

Today we feel the urgent need to give fresh impetus and new approaches to the work of evangelisation in a world in which the breaking down of frontiers and the new processes of globalisation are bringing individuals and peoples even closer.

Internal or international migration...as an opening in search of better living conditions or to flee from the threat of persecution, war, violence, hunger or natural disasters, has led to an unprecedented mingling of individuals and peoples, with new problems not only from the human standpoint, but also from ethical religious and spiritual ones.

The Church is faced with the challenge of helping migrants keep their faith firm even when they are deprived of the cultural support that existed in their country of origin.

Asylum seekers, who fled from persecution, violence and situations that put their life at risk, stand in need of our understanding and welcome, of respect for their human dignity and rights, as well as awareness of their duties.

Priests, men and women religious, lay people, and most of all young men and women are to be sensitive in offering support to their many sisters and brothers who, having fled from violence, have to face new lifestyles and the difficulty of integration.

Ideas for celebrating the Day of Prayer for Refugees and Migrants in parishes

- **The Day of Prayer is often an opportunity that parishes take to celebrate:**
 - **Cultural diversity** of our communities – *for example, through using hymns and prayers from the languages of your congregation.*
 - **Refugee or migrant backgrounds** of parishioners – *for example, by asking a member of your parish to talk about their journey to live in Aotearoa New Zealand.*
 - **Service to refugees and migrants** – *for example, by asking people who work as volunteers to resettle refugees and migrants, such as through Refugee Services, to talk about their work.*

- **Pope Benedict XVI's message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees**
 - Pope Benedict's 2012 message on the subject of migrants and refugees is available at: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/migration/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20110921_world-migrants-day_en.html

- **Powerpoint**
 - A short powerpoint display (13 slides) based on the Liturgical Readings of the Day presents some simple facts and reflections about refugees, which may be used as a reflection before Mass or after Communion, or in some other way that your parish wishes. It is available for download at www.caritas.org.nz/prayer-refugees or can be e-mailed if you contact lisa@caritas.org.nz.

- **Retiring collection**
 - Many parishes undertake a retiring collection or other small fundraising activity towards the work of supporting refugees in New Zealand and overseas. Day of Prayer for Refugees and Migrants donations sent to Caritas in 2012 will be split between the resettlement work of Refugee Services and support for people currently being displaced by drought and conflict in the Sahel region of Africa.

- **Advocacy**
 - An information sheet concerning the proposed law changes in the Immigration Amendment Bill currently being considered by the Transport and Industrial Relations Select Committee is available at www.caritas.org.nz/action-immigration - Please consider writing a letter to Minister of Immigration Nathan Guy and Select Committee Chair David Bennett about this Bill.



Caritas help for displaced people in the Sahel, West Africa

'The sound of gunfire woke us up,' said Mr Mahmouda, who fled his village in Mali after it came under attack from rebels. 'Although we were not directly threatened, we were scared. We took all we could carry and fled in the direction of Niger.'

Mr Mahmouda is one of more than 40,000 Malians who have sought refuge in Niger from conflict in northern Mali, where rebels have now declared a separate state. About 200,000 people have become refugees in neighbouring countries, while a similar number are displaced within Mali. The movements are complicating and placing extra stresses on the Sahel region of West Africa. Local communities are already weakened by a severe food crisis brought on by prolonged drought, poor harvests and high food prices.

About 15 million people's lives are at risk across nine countries, of which the hardest hit are Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Chad. The Caritas network is providing emergency aid and helping both displaced and resident populations. In Niger, the focus where refugees have arrived is on ensuring clean water and safe toilet facilities are provided. Water pipes are being extended and wells restored.

Programmes to support existing populations will also minimise migration of people for food or work elsewhere. Caritas is providing millet, cooking oil and legumes to 15,000 families; and seed for planting to a similar number. Food for Work and Cash for Work schemes are being put in place to provide for people where they are.



Refugee Services Aotearoa New Zealand

was originally formed in 1976 as a church-based response addressing the resettlement needs of refugees arriving in New Zealand. The Inter-church Commission on Immigration and Refugee Resettlement (ICCI), as it was then known, focused on refugee matters and also assisted a wide range of migrants and people applying for political asylum.

In 1986 the governance of ICCI was assumed by the Christian Conference of Churches of Aotearoa New Zealand (CCANZ), and in 1990 the agency became an officially incorporated society. Membership expanded to include representatives from other faiths, refugee communities and refugee-related agencies, and then in 2008 the agency became Refugee Services Aotearoa New Zealand.

Refugee Services leads refugee resettlement for the government of New Zealand, and since 1976, the agency, with support from the wider community, has supported over 45,000 refugees to build new lives in New Zealand. We empower refugees toward independence by supporting them to build on their existing strengths and become fully contributing members of their new country.

Our work would not be possible without our partners, including many churches and other organisations around the country, who do so much to help newly arrived refugees. From becoming volunteer support workers to donating furniture and goods for homes to providing financial support, our supporters enable those who have lost everything to start again.

For more information about us and how you can help refugees to start again, please visit our website at www.refugeeservices.org.nz, like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/refugeeservices, or follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/refugeeservnz!