



Prayer service on World Refugee Day - June 20, 2023

HYMN

“The world stands in need of liberation my Lord”. <https://youtu.be/DpXHGYtrTBc>

(As this hymn is sung, each sister offer a candle near the blessed tabernacle as a sign of asking light from the Lord)

INTRODUCTION

PRESENT CONDITION OF REFUGEES IN THE WORLD

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UUIfCKoPe68&t=78s> 110 MILLION FORCED TO FLEE
(This UNHCR video -6'33''- can be also watched as an introduction)

World Refugee Day is an international day designated by the United Nations to honour refugees around the world. It falls each year on June 20. The event aims to recognize the strength of the refugees who have fled the conflict and persecution of their country in hope of finding shelter and living a better life.

In the past decade, the global refugee crisis has more than doubled in scope. In 2022, the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) announced that we had surpassed the 100 million mark for total displacement, meaning that over 1.2% of the global population have been forced to leave their homes. Among these people are over 32.5 million refugees.

In 2022, **Eritrea** crossed the threshold of 501,000 refugees, meaning that nearly 14% of the country's population have been displaced due to violence and political instability.

The humanitarian crisis in the **Central African Republic** reached its tenth anniversary in 2022, a period marked by bouts of sectarian violence that have displaced over 1 million people. That includes nearly 738,000 refugees.

There were 986,000 **Somalian** refugees around the world. Now they are 799,000 with a significant decrease compared to previous years.

These are the top three countries but there are some more countries such as Rohingya, South Sudan, Sudan, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Syria, Congo, are having high number of country's population living as refugees in other countries.

It is an occasion to build empathy and understanding for their plight and to recognize their resilience in rebuilding their lives. Let us pray that the people escaping violence or persecution may cross borders safely without any discrimination due to their race, religion, gender, country or state of origin. Let us be filled with the spirit of Blessed Francisco Palau and give newness of life to our brothers and sisters who are in need of us.



"Holy Church... These people are your members, they are your body; save them... (MR 7, 7)

*"I belong completely to her... I live and will live for her; I live and shall die for her. Can I do something more for the Church?"
(MR 1, 29)*

SCRIPTURE READING

Choose one of the proposed readings **Leviticus 19:33-34** or **Matthew 25: 31-46**

RESPONSE: <https://youtu.be/mPDvOVsENSk> (a song by David Brymer)

My Savior was born a refugee
Was hunted in his own country
From heaven, an unplanned pregnancy
Adopted by his own family

God is not untouchable
Jesus bared his heart and soul
Our hands have touched the invisible
Now God is one of us

My Savior, he did not save himself
He suffered and brought the sick to health
His kingdom, for those in poverty
To know him, for those with eyes to see

Who could have thought? Who could imagine?
This kind of love, God has blood
Pouring out on a cross we made
God has a face, God has a name

God is not untouchable
Jesus bared his heart and soul
Our eyes have seen the invisible
Now God is one of us

Who could have thought? Who could imagine?
This kind of love, God has blood
Pouring out on a cross we made
God has a face, God has a name
God has a face, God has a name

My Savior, he died a lonely death
Forsaken at his final breath
No one to sing at his funeral
Did this life mean anything at all?

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, God with us
Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, God with us
Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, God with us

REFLECTION

God created the world but human beings split the world in the continents, countries, territories and created boundaries. The identity of human being is ceased to project humans as the IMAGE OF GOD due to selfishness and greed. This greed has reached its peak that the mighty countries don't even feel that only the vulnerable, marginalized, innocents and downtrodden of the society are mostly affected in the wars, violence, poverty, man made and human made calamities. Millions of refugee children are deprived of their basic rights and facilities, they are starved to death. They have lost their childhood and playfulness and have become victims of terror and panic. No medicine or any treatment can make them again optimistic. Refugees have no citizenship, no belongingness, and no affiliation. Human activists are vigilant to these situations. They do come out on the streets organizing campaigns, rallies, strikes and so on.

Can we ask a question to oneself that, can I increase the number of these activists? Can I contribute to the repair, to rehabilitate and to restore peace in them?

We cannot change the policy of governments but, of course, we can change our attitude towards them. We cannot reach out to the entire refugee population but, of course, we can extend our help to those who are in our localities. We cannot build educational institutes for them but, of course, we can go to them and teach words of love. We cannot take away their sorrows and pain but, of course, we can sit with them listen to their sorrows and griefs.

INTERCESSORY PRAYERS

God has made an everlasting covenant with his people, and he never ceases to bless them. Grateful for these gifts, we confidently direct our prayer to him. *Response: **Lord, bless your people.***

1. Let us pray for the Church.

Lord of love, lead the Church that reveals your glory, so that we may remain in you, practicing the commandments of love and showing them to the world. **Let us pray. R/**

2. Let us pray for world peace.

Lord, the fountain of peace, take care of the world divided and suffering from injustice and violence, and help all humankind to understand, love and live in peace. **Let us pray. R/**

3. Let us pray for the refugees

Christ, You came into the world and became a light to the strangers, may you spread your light on the families driven from their homeland and the refugees who have left their hometowns and country, help them to overcome difficulties and gain peace in their lives. **Let us pray. R/**

4. Let us pray for the volunteers

Lord, we bring before you who work hard for the refugees on World Refugee Day, and spend much of their lifetime at the service of the refugees, giving hope and courage as well as provide them basic needs. Dear Lord, give good health to the volunteers that they may continue doing the same and many more may follow them. **Let us pray. R/**

5. Let us pray for the refugee children:

Loving Father, Your Son Jesus had to flee to Egypt as a Baby with His earthly parents, He was a refugee in that land of Egypt, today we bring before you all the children of the refugee and migrants as they face many hazardous and vulnerable situation, insecurity, fear anxieties, terror, threats, abuse, unsafe living, deprivation of the basic needs. Lord we pray that their fear and anxieties may vanish through the interventions of good and loving Humanity. **Let us pray. R/**

6. Let us pray for the refugee women:

We pray for the refugee women as they become more vulnerable to the situation, difficulties of life increases for them more than men. Lord that they may be guarded by the Holy Spirit, to banish fear from their hearts, to protect them from inhuman actions like sexual harassment, and physical violence. **Let us pray. R/**

7. Let us pray for the world's politicians and public officials.

God of Justice, please take care of those who choose public office to serve the people so that they can perform public office properly without being swayed by the temptation of the wrong path. **Let us pray. R/**

8. Let us pray for the departed souls:

Lord, we pray for the people who lost their lives in the wars, violence and in any inhuman activities. Grant them eternal repose and everlasting life. **Let us pray. R/**

OUR FATHER PRAYER: *(Each sister in the community will hold the hands of each other as a sign of solidarity during the Lord's Prayer)*

CONCLUDING PRAYER

God Almighty Father, in your infinite compassion, we seek your divine protection for refugees who are often alone and afraid. Provide solace to those who have been witnesses of violence and destruction, who have lost parents, family, friends, home and all they had; comfort them in their sorrows and bring help in their time of need; bridge the gaps created by inhuman ways of human beings. We ask this prayer through Christ your Son. Amen.

FINAL HYMN

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NVPt0dou5LQ>

(Or any suitable hymn to Francisco Palau)