



World Refugee Day 20 June 2012



World Refugee Day was established by the United Nations to honour the courage, strength and determination of women, men and children who are forced to flee their homes under threat of persecution, conflict and violence.

COUNCIL FOR IMMIGRANTS

If you or your parish would like further information on our work please contact us at :

**Columba Centre,
Maynooth,
Co. Kildare
Ireland**

Tel: 01-505-3009

Email: immigrants@iecon.ie

**[www.catholicbishops/
immigrants.ie](http://www.catholicbishops/immigrants.ie)**

This booklet contains useful resources to raise awareness of refugee and asylum seekers in our parishes. These resources are:

1. What is migration?
2. Refugee Facts and Figures in Ireland.
3. Tips for becoming a welcoming parish.
4. 3 refugee reflections and prayers to use in your parish.
5. Useful contact details of refugee organisations in Ire-

“The Church hears the suffering cry of all who are uprooted from their own land, of families forcefully separated, of those who, in the rapid changes of our day, are unable to find a stable home anywhere. She senses the anguish of those without rights, without any security, at the mercy of every kind of exploitation, and she supports them in their unhappiness.”(No.6)

Pope John Paul II



Terminology

Who is a refugee?

International law defines refugees as people

- who are outside their country of origin and
- whose life and or human rights are seriously at risk because of
- who they are (e.g. their race, nationality, social group), or what they believe (e.g. their religious beliefs or political opinion); and their governments will not or cannot protect them.

Who is an asylum seeker?

The terms asylum seeker and refugee are often confused. Asylum seekers are people seeking recognition as refugees, who are waiting for the government to decide on their case. These people are entitled to stay in the State while their application to be considered as a refugee is being considered. They also have a right to a fair hearing of that application and to an appeal.

What is the difference between a migrant and a refugee?

Migrants and refugees increasingly make use of the same routes and means of transport, including undertaking dangerous sea crossings and using people smugglers. They are, however, fundamentally different and, thus, are treated differently under international law. Migrants, especially economic migrants, choose to move in order to improve their lives. Refugees have to move if they are to save their lives or preserve their freedom.



Facts and Figures

Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Ireland

- ⇒ There are approximately **10,000 refugees living in Ireland today**. Many other refugees who came to Ireland in the past are now Irish citizens.
- ⇒ Refugees have come to Ireland from all over the globe, fleeing from persecution and conflict. Many of them have made enormous sacrifices to get themselves and their families to safety and to start, under the protection of the Irish State, to re-build their lives.
- ⇒ There are currently approximately 5,293 people living in 38 reception centres around Ireland, most of whom are awaiting a decision on their application for refugee status, for subsidiary protection, or for humanitarian leave to remain (as at end February 2011).
- ⇒ Asylum seekers living in these centres are provided with three meals daily.
- ⇒ They receive EUR 19.10 a week per person and a further EUR 9.60 per child.
- ⇒ On occasion, they may receive a supplementary payment to help cover costs such as school uniforms and school books for their children.
- ⇒ They are not entitled to work.
- ⇒ Children under 18 are entitled to primary and secondary level education.
- ⇒ In 2011 there were 1,290 applications for refugee status in Ireland. There have been 243 applications from asylum seekers to date in 2012 (up to 31 March 2012).

(UNHCR Ireland, June 2012)



Welcoming Parish

There are lots of ways that you can help make parishes a more welcoming place for asylum seekers and refugees. From something as simple as smiling at your neighbour to saying hello in their language can make a huge difference.

Another great way to get to know refugees and asylum seekers better is to learn more about their culture. When we take a minute to learn about another person's culture and background, it improves our understanding and helps make our parishes nicer places to settle in.

Tips for welcoming People who may not speak English

1. *Say 'Hello'.*
2. *Acknowledge people; smile, make eye contact.*
3. *Ask and learn people's names.*
4. *Speak slowly and at a normal volume.*
5. *Use plain English.*
6. *Speak more than ask questions. People who are learning a language always understand more than they can say.*
7. *Be friendly, be sensitive and remember that communication includes body language and gestures.*

For more suggestions and resources (e.g. posters, prayers in different languages) on how to welcome newcomers into your parish please visit our website

www.catholicbishops/immigrants.ie



Reflection 1

Perhaps tomorrow...



Perhaps Tomorrow...

There is a saying that you don't know another person until you've walked around in their shoes. Perhaps we might try to do that through this story telling of a young African from Burundi:

My life was that of any young girl of 17 years. I had never thought that one day I would be far from my family, far from my country, far from all those who were very dear to me... But for me, my story has a common theme, a common denominator - that of being a "refugee".

I had my own country, I had my own brothers and sisters, my own parents. I had done nothing to deserve this punishment. I did not choose to become what I am. I have been forced to understand, to accept that what happens to me, that what will come I must take as it is.

I do not know what tomorrow will bring for my country, my family, my brothers and sisters. I know nothing about my future. I sometimes give myself justifications or give myself some hope that perhaps tomorrow it will be quite different from today; that tomorrow I will return, that tomorrow I will rediscover all those people whom I have lost. Tomorrow - whether it is in two years' time or ten or twenty - I may return to Burundi.

I have to rediscover my identity, my personality. I am going to do everything I can so that tomorrow I may help all those people who have helped me, who have loved me, who have accepted me, who have made me what I am.

One day, I will no longer cry because of this title of "Refugee". One day.... I will return and I will no longer be a burden on anybody.

May God help me to succeed, to maintain the courage, and above all the hope to



Reflection 2

Make all things new...



Make all things new...

Old Testament prophets spoke about a Jubilee year, a time when debts were forgiven, slaves set free, and right relationships restored. A Jubilee year is as much needed today as in biblical times.

Think of those who live in the shadow of hunger, poverty, unemployment, debt, sickness, repression, injustice. Think of the unemployed, those forced to migrate leaving family and friends behind.

As Christians, people of the New Testament we abhor all that threatens life. We want a world where the human dignity of all is respected and where work, education, health, housing, are rights enjoyed by all.

*Grant us, Lord God a world where the weak are protected, and no one goes hungry;
a world where the riches of creation are shared;
a world where different cultures live in harmony and mutual respect;
a world where peace is built with justice, and justice is guided by love.
We pray for a world renewed with your spirit.
With the Lord of history who makes all things new.*

May we be a Jubilee People - a people of Christ who call for justice and peace, and who make right relationships. Be with us as we stand with our neighbours around the world calling for a new world, where all of your children are valued. With you Lord, we will make all things new. Amen



Reflection 3

The love of Christ towards Migrants...



The Love of Christ towards Migrants...

"Urges us to look afresh at their problems, which are to be met with today all over the world.Migration therefore touches the religious dimension of man too and offers Catholic migrants a privileged though often painful opportunity to reach a sense of belonging to the universal Church which goes beyond any local particularity. To this end it is important that communities do not think that they have completed their duty to migrants simply by performing acts of fraternal assistance or even by supporting legislation aimed at giving them their due place in society while respecting their identity as foreigners. Christians must in fact promote an authentic culture of welcome capable of accepting the truly human values of the immigrants over and above any difficulties caused by living together with persons who are different. "

(Erga migrantes caritas Christi 39)

*Lord, forgive us the times we have ignored those in need,
or refused a welcome to those you have embraced.
Strengthen us with your grace, open our hearts,
that our thoughts, words and deeds,
may reflect your love for the neighbours you set before us,
for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever.*

Amen.



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Useful Contact Details



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Non Governmental Organisations

UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) Ireland
<http://www.unhcr.ie/>

Immigrant Council of Ireland
<http://www.immigrantcouncil.ie/>

Crosscare Migrant Project
<http://www.migrantproject.ie/>

Integrating Ireland
<http://www.integratingireland.ie/>

Migrants Rights Centre of Ireland
<http://www.mrci.ie/>

Refugee Information Services
<http://www.ris.ie/>

Irish Refugee Council
<http://www.irishrefugeecouncil.ie/>

International Organisation for Migration
<http://www.iomdublin.org>

Jesuit Refugee Services
<http://www.jrs.ie/>

NASC (The Irish Immigrant Support Centre,
Cork)
<http://www.nascireland.org/>

SPIRASI (Asylum Service Initiative)
<http://www.spirasi.ie/>

Vincentians Refugee Centre
<http://www.vincentians.ie/VRC.htm>

Caritas Europa
<http://www.caritas-europa.org/>

Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care for
Migrants
http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/migrants/

Government Websites

Irish Naturalisation and Immigration
Service
<http://www.inis.gov.ie>

Department of Justice, Equality and Law
Reform
<http://www.justice.ie>

Information on Work Permits
<http://www.entemp.ie>

Department of Social and Family Affairs
<http://www.welfare.ie>