



RENEWING WELCOME

A GUIDE FOR PRAYER, REFLECTION, AND ACTION DURING LENT

Jesuit Refugee Service/USA



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INTRODUCTION

Lent is a time when we can reflect on our thoughts and actions and renew our commitment to be Christ’s companion. At Jesuit Refugee Service, this means a particular commitment to be companions of refugees.

For many of us, we need this call to recommit. We are tired - tired of negative headlines about refugees, of rhetoric that cuts against the grain of our faith and values, and of the significant unmet needs that exist around the world.

We invite you to use this publication, *Renewing Welcome* - with reflections, prayers, and actions you can take - to renew your commitment to refugees as we prepare for the renewal of Christ and the resurrection.

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Photo Credits:

Cover: Refugees from the Central African Republic celebrate Palm Sunday with a procession. (Peter Bellies SJ, Jesuit Refugee Service)
 Above: An internally displaced woman stands in her home where she has a statue of Christ in Caledonia, Zimbabwe(Jesuit Refugee Service)
 Pg 2: Fr. Leo J. O’Donovan sits with Jack, a refugee, who sings him a song in Kibera, a slum of Nairobi, Kenya. (Jesuit Refugee Service)
 Pages 7-11: Internally Displaced People in Yei, South Sudan perform a living Stations of the Cross. (Angela Hullmuth - Jesuit Refugee Service)

CELEBRATING SOLIDARITY

By Leo J. O'Donovan, S.J.
Director of Mission, Jesuit Refugee Service,/USA



Lent is obviously a penitential season. Priests wear purple vestments. Statues in churches are covered. And from the 6th century through to the Tridentine missal and up until 1969, the Gospel for Ash Wednesday was Mt 6.16-21, which emphasized fasting and encouraged Christians to store up for themselves treasures not on earth, but in heaven. In 1969 the Roman Rite revised that reading to Mt 6.1-6, 16-18, which speaks more fully not only of fasting but also of righteous deeds, almsgiving, and prayer—a threefold prescription on how to observe the forty days to come.

The revision was slight, perhaps, but clearly intended a broader view of Lent. That sense was even more apparent in the wonderful new Second Preface, which addressed the Lord our God by saying: "Each year you give us this joyful season to prepare to celebrate the Paschal Mystery with minds and hearts renewed." (Some of this tone, but unfortunately not much, survives in the language of the current revised translation.)

"But what does such liturgical nicety mean to us?" you might well ask. And the answer is: a great deal. For Lent is a time to focus above all not on *our* journey but on accompanying Jesus on *his* journey to Jerusalem. Of course the way profits from our learning how to direct our lives more graciously. But we do that best when we long to be ready for the coming of God in the great mystery of eternal life born from sacrificial death through the living and risen Jesus.

And who is the Jesus whose Paschal Mystery we are preparing to celebrate? It is not Jesus an isolated individual for whom resurrection is an individual reward and singular honor. It is rather Jesus "the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep," as St. Paul says (1 Cor 15.20). It is Jesus who is brother to us all and into whose mystical body we are called to belong. In this sense then, the celebration of Lent, with all its practices, is a celebration of solidarity, the promise and project that all God's sons and daughters—all, without exception—are meant for union with God and in God with one another.

In January of this year, celebrating a Mass for peace and justice in Santiago, Chile, Pope Francis dwelt on the first words of fifth chapter in St. Matthew's Gospel: "When Jesus saw the crowds...." The Pope suggested that in the gaze of Jesus the people encountered "the echo of their longings and aspirations." That encounter gave rise to the Beatitudes, "born of the compassionate heart of Jesus" and a horizon toward which we are all still called today. In proclaiming the Beatitudes, the Pope continued, Jesus "shakes us out of that negativity, that sense of resignation that makes us think we can have a better life if we escape from our problems, shun others, hide within our comfortable existence, dulling our senses with consumerism." Such a "sense of resignation," he warned, "tends to isolate us from others, to divide and separate us, to blind us to life around us and to the suffering of others." Put positively, the Pope was calling us to solidarity with our fellow human beings, and especially with the poor and those in greatest need.

It is not hard to identify those poor, 65.6 million of whom are refugees or internally displaced people—driven from their homes and communities and schools and often, as well, their very parents. How can we really live "this joyful season" without caring in some way for them?

40 PRAYERS FOR 40 DAYS

Whether you have a regular daily prayer you'd like to dedicate during the time of Lent, or you'd like to use Lent as an opportunity to focus your energy towards migrants and refugees, here are 40 intentions for the 40 days of Lent.

Ash Wednesday For all people who have been forced to flee their homes.

Day 2 For all those living in refugee camps around the world.

Day 3 For those in transit, traveling to a safer place than where they came.

Day 4 For peace, so that those forced to flee from violence can return to their homes.

Day 5 For those who work with and accompany refugees.

Day 6 For advocates who work to defend refugees' rights.

Day 7 For welcome in communities around the world.

Day 8 For policymakers, so that they may have compassion and solidarity with refugees.

Day 9 For strength that we may all participate in welcoming and defending the rights of refugees and displaced persons.

Day 10 For volunteers who dedicate their time to refugees.

Day 11 For half of all refugees - children.

Day 12 For the education of all children caught in crisis and conflict.

Day 13 For teachers and mentors of refugee children.

Day 14 For leaders and decision makers, so that they may dedicate the resources needed for all displaced children to have the opportunity to get an education.

Day 15 For the safety of all displaced children as they travel to school.

Day 16 For the mental health and psychological well being of children who have gone through trauma during their displacement.

Day 17 For all those refugees living in cities, that they may be welcomed and helped, not ignored and disdained.

Day 18 For refugees without an opportunity to earn an income, that they may receive the rights, training, and support to make their own income and a new life.

Day 19 For refugees to be seen and recognized in the communities that they've moved to.

Day 20 For the openness of communities to recognize that new people and cultures enrich their own.

Day 21 For those mothers, fathers, and caregivers who are displaced who are trying to raise families.



Roya, a JRS student, and her family live near the city of Herat, Afghanistan, not far from the border of Iran. She lived for years in exile but returned to their home country after the fall of the Taliban as some hope of a peaceful and secure future emerged. (Jesuit Refugee Service)

- Day 22** For refugees who are not only dealing with the challenges of displacement, but face chronic or debilitating disease or injury.
- Day 23** For refugees and displaced people returning home, that they are able to reconcile.
- Day 24** For the environment, so that natural disasters do not cause displacement and hunger.
- Day 25** For peace so that violence and terror does not cause innocent civilians to flee from their homes.
- Day 26** For the end of wars and the reconciliation of those involved.
- Day 27** For Parishes Answering Pope Francis's call to welcome a refugee family.
- Day 28** For those who have been forced to flee within the borders of their own country.
- Day 29** For communities around the United States to take action to help and to welcome refugees.
- Day 30** For refugees who are being resettled in the United States, that they may receive welcome and opportunity within our country.
- Day 31** For lawmakers in the United States, that they may see that our country is enriched by the diversity of immigrants and refugees.
- Day 32** For refugees who continue to wait to be received by the United States, that God may comfort them and provide them hope.
- Day 33** For those that come to the United States seeking asylum.
- Day 34** For all of the organizations, agencies, families, parishes, and individuals who take responsibility for the care and integration of refugees into the United States.
- Day 35** For displaced women and girls, that they may have safety and opportunity.
- Day 36** For hope for all displaced people.
- Day 37** For the right of all to have a place they call home.
- Holy Thursday** As Jesus celebrates the last supper, for food and nourishment for all those who are displaced.
- Good Friday** For those who are suffering from violence or pain, as Christ did on the cross.
- Holy Saturday** For all those waiting, waiting to know the fate of their displacement.
- Easter** For all people who have been forced to flee their homes, that Christ's resurrection provides light in the darkness and pain of displacement.



*A Child in the Goz Amir Refugee Camp in Chad. The camp is home to 25,000 refugees, primarily from the Darfur region of neighboring Sudan.
(Christian Fuchs – Jesuit Refugee Service/USA)*

LEARNING UNDENIABLE RESILIENCE

By Sandy M. Abboud

JRS Volunteer and Senior at Loyola Maryland University.



Sandy and her students. (photo courtesy of Sandy Abboud)

I started volunteering with local elementary, middle, and high schools in the Baltimore area that held educational and mentorship programs for refugee youth resettled in the city. Each child that I had the privilege of working with painted a new face to what it means to be human and undeniably resilient. As I mentored children of all ages, it became clear to me that all people are simply people; children will be joyful and loving children, young adults will be ambitious and hopeful, and adults will be flexible and hardworking. These facts remained consistent among each refugee that I worked alongside. From Nepal to Syria, from 5 to 77 years old, female or male, and of all religious backgrounds, the resilience of the human spirit did not waiver.

With every hour spent in Baltimore, I increasingly yearned for more experience, travel, and human connection. As a first-generation Lebanese immigrant to the United States, I often spent my summers abroad visiting family and exploring my country of origin. In a recent journey to the Middle East, I was inspired to delve into my dynamic community which had now become home to numerous refugees. I began working with the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Lebanon's students that required holistic education—about life, health, and their future. Some students lost themselves to the burdens that they carried, some excelled academically with hopes of a new future, and others experienced health concerns that neither child or parent understood. My first summer with the JRS illustrated the importance of hope as a transformative element of life.

I chose to invest in my students on a personal level by working with families and providing mentorship that encouraged movement. Initially, I expected that my identity as a Lebanese-American student could negatively impact my ability to create comfort and a basic sense understanding between the refugee youth and myself. After my first introduction, I found that the student whole-heartedly accepted my presence and even found curiosity in the United States. I worked with each student on an individual basis, and I often found that sharing the story of my own up-bringing in a middle-class immigrant family inspired the students. I would recount my experiences transitioning to a new culture and finding motivation to excel academically in spite of any adversity that I had faced. These students found comfort in the prospects of their futures as academics and active global citizens. Their continued determination and ambition continues to inspire me.

I wish to express my deepest appreciation to Mahmoud and Elias, the first two students that brought me to tears with their smiles and positivity regardless of the unfathomable hardships that they endured. Although I was their teacher and mentor, I gained a new appreciation for life and humanity with each gleam of hope in the eyes of these children. I can only hope that they both continue to spread the light within their souls and in turn find this light in others. I am inspired beyond what I can express in words. Watching Mahmoud and Elias peep their heads out of the bus for the final day of class that summer is a moment that will continue to propel forward in my pursuit to become a medical doctor for children who carry the shortcomings of the world on their shoulders.

Do1Thing



For many of us, Lent is a time when we give up one thing like chocolate, TV, or a bad habit. But, this Lent, consider DOING one thing.

JRS's #Do1Thing campaign is a great way to identify what you can do during lent and respond to our shared responsibility is to *welcome*, to *protect*, *promote*, and to *integrate* our brothers and sisters who have been forced to flee their homes.

We think that, no matter where you live, there is always one thing you can do to help refugees. Doing just one thing in your community or to advocate on behalf of refugees can have ripple effects that can help refugees and migrants.

...SO, WHAT IS THAT ONE THING YOU CAN DO THIS LENT?

EXPERIENCE

Use JRS/USA's [Walk a Mile in My Shoes Refugee Simulation](#) and provide your community with an opportunity to pause and learn about the experience, the frustrations, disappointments, and hopes that refugees around the world face.

WRITE

Send a message of hope and solidarity by writing a postcard to a refugees. Visit [anyrefugee.org](#) to learn more about how.

ADVOCATE

[Send a letter to your elected officials](#) and urge change from foreign policy decision-makers about the importance of U.S. leadership on refugee issues. Visit [jrsusa.org/advocacy](#) to learn more.

PRAY

Pray for protection for refugees as well as for personal transformation as we face the needs of refugees everywhere. Use *40 Prayers for 40 Days* to help you (pages 3-4).

SHOP

Purchase refugee-made items. By purchasing a product, you are helping families to sustain a tangible income and livelihood.

VOLUNTEER

Find the local refugee resettlement agency offices near you and help a refugee in need of assistance learning a new language, meeting friends, or even finding employment and housing.

FUNDRAISE

Gather your local community or parish and raise funds for refugees around the world. Contact [eward@jesuits.org](#) to get started.

SHARE

Do you have stories of one thing you've done to welcome, promote, protect, and integrate refugees and migrants in your community? Let us know! Email [jrscommunications@jesuits.org](#) or share on social media using #Do1thing.

RENEWAL - MELINDA'S STORY



Carl and Fartune walked into the room and Molline lit up. She was thrilled to have both JRS community health workers back in her apartment. "I prefer they stay with me the whole time," Molline said.

Molline and her sister Melinda arrived in Johannesburg over two years ago. Since that time, Molline has been taking care of Melinda who is suffering from paralysis and complications from HIV. The constant care and lack of medical resources made their transition as asylum seekers from Zimbabwe feel impossible. The two sisters and Molline's husband live in a one-room

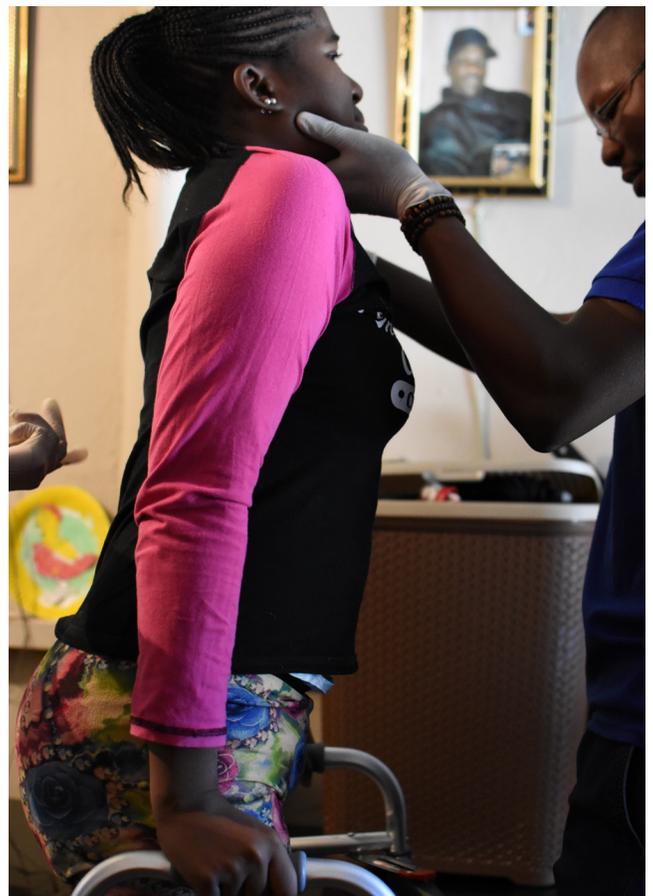
apartment up a flight of unstable stairs. Molline had spent much of her time taking care of her sister, carrying her on her back up and down the stairs. Though both women had formerly worked, the burden of disease left them with no time or emotional energy to find a job or the ability to make a new life in a new place. This is where JRS found them.

JRS was able to identify Molline and Melinda as in need of assistance and provided community health workers Carl and Fartune. Carl and Fartune visit Molline and Melinda a few times a week. They perform physical therapy and massage to help Melinda to regain feeling and control of her legs and to relieve pain. But, the assistance that Carl and Fartune give is beyond just physical therapy and basic medical assistance. They help Molline to clean, to ensure that there aren't further bacterial infections and to cook, so that Melinda has the nutrition she needs to heal. They also connect the family to other needed services and medical assistance.

Carl, who migrated to South Africa from Zimbabwe, and Fartune, who was born in Somalia and is a trained nurse, work in the Mayfair neighborhood and use their skills, language, love, and cultural understandings to travel throughout the neighborhood. They clean wounds, check in on infirmed patients, help caregivers find the right resources, and ensure that their clients have access to further medical care. Their dedication to their patients and the love and accompaniment they provide has already made a significant impact on the lives they've touched.

In the few months that Carl and Fartune have been working with Melinda, they have seen miraculous results. Melinda, who was previously barely sitting up, can now stand on a walker and hopes to be able to use it to walk soon.

"I didn't have hope," Molline said referring to the time before Carl and Fartune came into her life, "but now, I have hope."



*(Top Left) Carl and Fartune do physical therapy with Melinda
(Bottom Right) Carl helps Melinda to stand with a walker
(Sarah Carroll, Jesuit Refugee Service/USA)*

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Use these Stations of the Cross to accompany Jesus on his journey, as we watch and pray over displaced people around the world.



I - JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

Reflection: Over 5.4 million people have fled Syria since 2011. Millions more are displaced inside Syria, as war continues. The international community has not yet succeeded in creating the necessary conditions to halt the tide of bloodshed despite the desperate pleas of a majority of Syrians for an end to the conflict. Dare we wash our hands of their plight like Pilate, or shall we immerse ourselves in solidarity — remembering that these injustices can be addressed?

Lord, may we not wash our hands of our brothers and sisters in Syria, and may you rain down upon them with all of the love and peace you were denied in your condemnation.

II - JESUS TAKES UP HIS CROSS

Reflection: Fr. Pedro Arrupe S.J., who was so “struck and shocked by the plight” of the Vietnamese boat people in the wake of the Vietnam War that he was moved to found Jesuit Refugee Service. Fr. Arrupe allowed himself to be moved by the suffering of others, and took up the challenge — however burdensome — of helping others. He did not turn away. By whose suffering have we been struck? By what injustice have we been shocked? Will we choose to take up the challenges of our times?

Lord, may we be “struck and shocked by the plight” of our brothers and sisters worldwide and follow in the steps of Fr. Arrupe as we humbly bear the cross that awareness brings.

III - JESUS FALLS FOR THE FIRST TIME

Reflection: Cristina is a migrant JRS met at the Kino Border Initiative in Nogales, Mexico. After coming to the desperate realization that she could not afford basic necessities in Mexico, Cristina decided to flee to the U.S. in the hopes of securing work. Her coyote said it would take only five hours to cross the desert, so she brought no food or water for the passage. Her group was caught the second night, and she fell and injured her leg while trying to escape. The border patrol ran by her, and she was not seen while they gathered the other migrants and began to leave. She knew that she was well hidden, but how would she find her way out of the desert? The guides had run away, she was injured, and had no food or water. She called for help, and when they did not hear her, she struggled to her feet and hobbled after them. She would become one of the hundreds of migrants who die in the desert every year.

Lord, we pray for vulnerable migrants that you may grant them strength and safety in their journeys, and we pray for open hearts to understand their desperate motivations.

IV - JESUS MEETS HIS BLESSED MOTHER

Reflection: Every year, millions of women give birth to children while on their journey of displacement - in transit, in camps, in urban areas. These women are often without the necessary medical interventions, the comforts of home, or a family they can call upon. But each of these women feels the same labor pains and love of their children as Mary did and as other women around the world do.

Lord, we pray for all of the displaced mothers throughout the world. In their strength and vulnerability, may they feel your presence as they do their best to mother during their displacement.

V - SIMON OF CYRENE BEARS THE CROSS

Reflection: More than 3.3 million South Sudanese are currently displaced - the fastest-growing refugee population of 2016. Added to the famine and the economic crisis (inflation rated at more than 800%), this has created a humanitarian crisis in South Sudan of unprecedented proportions. In the midst of these challenges, we must do everything we can to help carry their burden. JRS is currently investing in education, psychosocial support, and pastoral activities.

Lord, may you remind us that you have called us to carry your cross and ease the burdens of your people just as you called Simon.

VI - VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS

Reflection: When Veronica sees Christ's bloody face, she makes the bold choice to reach out and embrace him in his vulnerability and suffering. When have we lacked the courage to reach out to connect with the suffering of our displaced brothers and sisters as Veronica did?

Lord, open our eyes to see your suffering face in our brothers and sisters in need, and grant us Veronica's courage to help.

VII - JESUS FALLS A SECOND TIME

Reflection: Often refugees arrive in exile without shoes, hungry, and without a clear plan. But they did not undergo this experience in order to get a shirt or a meal. Their human experience calls for respect. They are traumatized by violence, feeling lonely and rejected. They are exhausted from the journey and from losing their place in a stable society.

Lord, as we see your full humanity and suffering, may we see the full humanity and suffering that our displaced brothers and sisters.



VIII - JESUS COMFORTS THE WOMEN

Reflection: In his compassion, Jesus asks the women to weep for the most vulnerable members of society in his time — women and children. Today, conditions have not changed, and of the 65 million refugees and displaced persons in the world, half are women and girls. Positive changes have been made, but women still face the most poverty, lack equal access to education, and are at greater risk for human trafficking.

Lord, we pray for women and children around the world. You asked us to weep for their oppression, and we pray that we may see their gifts, their strengths, and their plight as you do. We pray for the wisdom to break down the structures that oppress people based on gender, and we ask that you protect this overwhelming majority of the displaced population.

IX - JESUS FALLS A THIRD TIME

Reflection: The majority of refugees do not live in camps, but in urban settings. Cities like Johannesburg and Bangkok host thousands of refugees. Often barred from legal employment and social services, urban refugees are forced to hide in the shadows.

Lord, may the eyes of urban refugees throughout the world call out to us, and may we respond as we have responded to your suffering.



X - JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS

Reflection: Every year, thousands of asylum seekers flee to the United States after facing great persecution in their homelands, only to be interned and stripped of their possessions and dignity. In the United States, over 360,000 immigrants and refugees were detained in 2016.

Lord, help us to recognize the humanity of those seeking a better life in the United States and help us to create a country where they are not stripped of their possessions and judged as criminals.

XI - JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

Reflection: Just As Jesus' hands and feet were pierced with nails, many people throughout the world have been pierced by the violence of conflict and war. We call to mind the image of Jesus Christ disabled by the nails, living in solidarity with innocent victims of violence.

Lord, as we see you wounded on the cross, help us to recognize the wounds of our brothers and sisters throughout the world. We pray for peace and healing.

XII - JESUS DIES

Reflection: An increasing number of people are being displaced by natural disasters and environmental destruction. Many of us in the United States contribute to that destruction without even thinking about it. Just as we are all responsible for putting Jesus to death, we must too take responsibility for our contributions to the destruction of the environment and climate.

Lord, forgive us for what we have done to contribute to displacement through environmental destruction, and help us to heal the earth so that no more of our brothers and sisters are displaced by its destruction.

XIII - JESUS IS TAKEN FROM THE CROSS

Reflection: Christ is taken from the cross and darkness settles upon the world, for the Son of God has been slain by the peoples' hands. Today this darkness lives on as cycles of violence and oppression continue. And yet, even in the midst of darkness, JRS bears daily witness to God's presence in vulnerable and forgotten people driven from their homes by conflict, natural disaster, economic injustice, or violation of their human rights. Every day we see the strong determination of refugees to rise above their circumstances, however tragic they may be.

Lord, we pray that you continue to give hope and strength in darkness to our sisters and brothers who have been forced to flee their homes.

XIV - JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB

Reflection: The hope and light of the world has been laid to rest, and the women of Galilee and faithful followers ache with despair. Each year, millions of vulnerable brothers and sisters seek refuge in new lands that are not always friendly to their arrival. Wherever this suffering is present in the world, there the cross of Christ is mysteriously present. It is by this cross that light pierces through the darkness as those suffering wait in hope for the joyful coming of the Lord.

Lord, may you provide light and hope to refugees and displaced people as they wait to learn of their fate.

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Jesuit Refugee Service is an international Catholic organization serving refugees and other forcibly displaced people. Founded as a work of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) in 1980, in direct response to the humanitarian crisis of the Vietnamese boat people, JRS today works in 51 countries worldwide to meet the educational, health, and social needs of more than 750,000 refugees.

JRS/USA is the U.S. office for JRS based in Washington, DC. JRS/USA provides support to the broader JRS network - through funding, oversight, monitoring, and evaluation - to JRS projects and programming throughout the world. JRS/USA also serves forcibly displaced migrants in the US through our Detention Chaplaincy Program.



visit www.JRSUSA.org to get more information and get involved