

# Prayer for the

## DAY OF THE REFUGEE

June 20, 2017

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Immigration Committee

**65.3 million**

The number of refugees, asylum-seekers, and internally displaced people around the world has topped **65 million**.

(United Nations High Commissioner  
for Refugees)

### Call to Prayer and Reconciliation:

Today we join our hearts and minds in solidarity with our sisters and brothers who, at this very moment, are refugees, families and individuals who are migrating all over the world.

Jesus, when you multiplied the loaves and fishes, you provided more than food for the body, you offered us the gift of yourself, the gift which satisfies every hunger and quenches every thirst! Your disciples were filled with fear and doubt, but you poured out your love and compassion on the migrant crowd, welcoming them as brothers and sisters.

Jesus, today you call us to welcome the members of God's family who come to our land to escape oppression, poverty, persecution, violence, and war. Like your disciples, we too are filled with fear and doubt and even suspicion. We build barriers in our hearts and in our minds.

Jesus, help us by your grace,

- To banish fear from our hearts, that we may embrace each of your children as our own brother and sister;
- To welcome migrants and refugees with joy and generosity, while responding to their many needs;
- To realize that you call all people to your holy mountain to learn the ways of peace and justice;
- To share of our abundance as you spread a banquet before us;
- To give witness to your love for all people, as we celebrate the many gifts they bring.

We praise you and give you thanks for the family you have called together from so many people. We see in this human family a reflection of the divine unity of the one Most Holy Trinity in whom we make our prayer: Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier. Amen.



Photograph by **Daniet Etter**/New York Times/Redux /. *Laith Majid cries tears of joy and relief that he and his children have made it to Europe.* Photo acquired from SeekersHub

Be aware that Jesus is with you as you consider this photo of Laith Majid and his children. Mr. Majid has made the long journey of every refugee. He left all that is familiar, all that he called home. After risking the water in a frail vessel, he and his children have come to shore. The photographer tells us that his tears express relief; we also see grief and fear, the end of one terror and the beginning of a greater unknown.

We do not see his wife, the children's mother. Is Laith the single parent of these little ones as they enter this foreign land? Is his face the only familiar sight they see?

Take time to sit with each child: the small girl, clinging to her father's neck; the young boy, too big to cry, too young to be as brave as is required of him. What do the children tell you?

Ask Jesus to help you see those standing on the shore to receive the Majid family. Are they official representatives of immigration in this new land? Will they be kind and solicitous? Will they ask for documents and reasons? Will they begin proceedings to deport the family?

Ask Jesus to show you those left behind. Are they victims of injustice? Do they grieve the loss of these loved ones?

Where are you in this picture?

**Watch the video of Manal Alazzam: Syrian woman, widow, mother of five children, refugee.**

<https://vimeo.com/219010289>

**Since arriving in the United States in March, 2016, Manal and her children have been living in an SSND house at Villa Notre Dame, Wilton Ct.**

In light of the experiences shared by Manal and Laith, allow yourself to share the mind and heart of Warsan Shire as she reflects on the refugee's choice to leave home.

"Home" (Selections) by Warsan Shire

no one leaves home unless  
home is the mouth of a shark  
you only run for the border  
when you see the whole city running as well

your neighbors running faster than you  
breath bloody in their throats  
the boy you went to school with  
who kissed you dizzy behind the old tin factory  
is holding a gun bigger than his body  
you only leave home  
when home won't let you stay....

you have to understand,  
that no one puts their children in a boat  
unless the water is safer than the land  
no one burns their palms  
under trains  
beneath carriages  
no one spends days and nights in the stomach of a truck  
feeding on newspaper unless the miles travelled  
means something more than journey.  
no one crawls under fences  
no one wants to be beaten  
pitied....

i want to go home,  
but home is the mouth of a shark  
home is the barrel of the gun  
and no one would leave home  
unless home chased you to the shore  
unless home told you  
to quicken your legs  
leave your clothes behind  
crawl through the desert  
wade through the oceans  
drown  
save  
be hunger  
beg  
forget pride  
your survival is more important  
no one leaves home until home is a sweaty voice in your ear

*no one leaves home unless  
home is the mouth of a shark  
you only run for the border  
when you see the whole city  
running as well*



saying-  
leave,  
run away from me now  
i don't know what i've become  
but i know that anywhere  
is safer than here

### **Share with One Another Your Reflection:**

*What am I coming to know and understand as I contemplate the life of a refugee?*

*Do I experience a call to be in solidarity with those who are refugees? If so, how am I responding?*

*How might I raise the consciousness of others to the real life situation of refugees? How might I be an advocate?*

### **Together, Let Us Pray:**

God of our Wandering Ancestors,

Long have we known  
That your heart is with the refugee:  
That you were born into time  
In a family of refugees  
Fleeing violence in their homeland,  
Who then gathered up their hungry child  
And fled into alien country.

Their cry, your cry, resounds through the ages:  
"Will you let me in?"

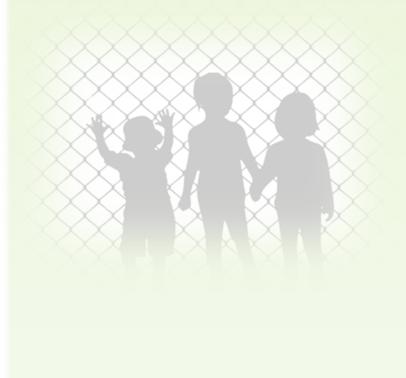
Give us hearts that break open  
When our brothers and sisters turn to us  
with that same cry.

Then surely all these things will follow:  
Ears will no longer turn deaf to their voices.  
Eyes will see a moment for grace instead of a threat.  
Tongues will not be silenced but will instead advocate.

And hands will reach out—  
working for peace in their homeland,  
working for justice in the lands where they seek safe haven.

God of our Wandering Ancestors  
Protect all refugees in their travels.  
May they find a friend in me  
And so make me worthy  
Of the refuge I have found in you.

*Their cry,  
your cry,  
resounds  
through  
the ages:  
"Will you let  
me in?"*



(Catholic Relief Services)