
World Refugee Day 2019

~Prayer Service~

By Kathleen Bonnette, Th.D.

Office of Justice, Peace, & Integrity of Creation

School Sisters of Notre Dame – Atlantic-Midwest Province

Call to Prayer:

On this World Refugee Day, we pray for the nearly 70 million people around the world who have been forced to leave their homes, including more than 25 million refugees, over half of whom are children. Refugees are victims of political violence and persecution, who have no choice but to seek safe haven in a foreign nation. Let us pray, too, for those who are displaced because of climate change, war, drug-and gang-related violence, and food and water insecurity. These



people, who cannot sustain minimum conditions of dignity in their home countries, migrate for survival and “find themselves in a neither/nor situation – neither are they generally recognized as refugees, nor are they simply voluntary economic migrants” (Collier and Betts, *Refuge*, 44). The United Nations protocols regarding refugees were developed in response to the state-sanctioned persecution of World War II and the Cold War, and they have not been adapted to the new drivers of “survival migration.” We pray for wisdom and grace for leaders and citizens of powerful nations, so that a just response to the plight of refugees and survival migrants might be developed and implemented.

Opening Song:

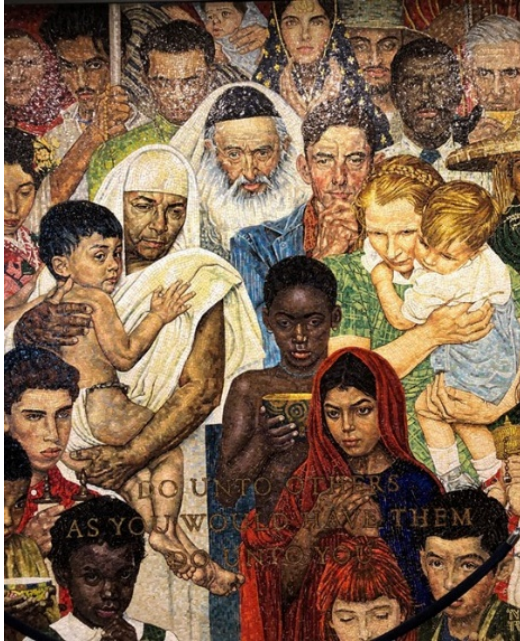
[We Are Called](#) (sheet music included below)

Reading: From Leviticus 19

When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner. ... When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt.

Responsorial: Matthew 25:34-45

Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him and say,



All: 'When did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?'

And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.' Then they will answer and say,

All: 'When did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?'

He will answer them, 'Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.'

Reading: From Augustine's City of God, XIX.15

The whole City of God on pilgrimage in the world ... cries out to God through the lips of all its members: "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." And this prayer is not effective for those whose "faith, without works, is dead" but only for those whose "faith is put into action through love."

Reflection/Sharing:

As you watch this video ([What They Took With Them](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xS-Q2sgNjI8)), you are invited to reflect on what it would mean to be forced to flee your home, and to be denied the opportunity to work or contribute your gifts to a host society. What does this poem convey about the hopes, fears, needs, and gifts of these refugees?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xS-Q2sgNjI8>

Intercessions:

We offer these intentions, asking for the mercy of Christ and the intercession of our Holy Mother, Mary, and Saint Joseph:

For all refugees, whose lives are decimated by violence and persecution. May they find safe haven in the welcoming arms of their neighbors, and may they be kept from prejudice, discrimination, and exclusion.

All: Let us put our faith into action through love.

For all survival migrants, whose lives and livelihoods are no longer sufficient to uphold their dignity. May they find mercy and security in the welcoming arms of their neighbors, and may they be kept from prejudice, discrimination, and exclusion.

All: Let us put our faith into action through love.

For all nations in which rampant violence is normalized. May the perpetrators experience a change of heart toward peace.

All: Let us put our faith into action through love.

For all host nations proximal to conflicts. May they develop wise and gracious policies for accepting and including refugees in their societies.

All: Let us put our faith into action through love.

For developed nations removed from conflict regions and so not required to care for refugees in a specified way. May those in power and all citizens stand in solidarity with refugees and survival migrants, as well as host nations, through economic, institutional, and admission policies, and may they work toward eliminating the causes of all forced displacement.

All: Let us put our faith into action through love.

Closing Prayer:

Triune God,

You are our “refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble” (*Psalm 46*). As we embody Christ (*1 Cor. 12*), we pray for the grace to extend this refuge, strength, and help to all in need. Help us to recognize that we, too, are a “pilgrim people” – migrants journeying ever closer to the home Christ is preparing in the unity of all that is (*John 14 and 17*), and give us the courage to seek justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with you (*Micah 6:8*).

Amen.



749 Come! Live in the Light!

We Are Called



1 Come! Live in the light! Shine with the
 2 Come! O - pen your heart! Show your
 3 Sing! Sing a new song! Sing of that



joy and the love of the Lord! We are called
 mer - cy to all those in fear! We are called
 great day when all will be one! God will reign,



to be light for the king - dom, to live in the
 to be hope for the hope - less so ha - tred and
 and we'll walk with each oth - er as sis - ters and



free - dom of the cit - y of God.
 vio - lence will be no more.
 broth - ers u - nit - ed in love.



Refrain
 We are called to act with jus - tice; we are called to



love ten - der - ly; we are called to serve one an -



oth - er, to walk hum - bly with God.

The thematic and musical center of this hymn on the vocation of all believers is found in the refrain, which is based on the well-known challenge of Micah 6:8, "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"