

# Vigil to Pray for Refugees



## Opening prayer

We come together to pray for men, women and children forced to flee their homeland under the threat of persecution, conflict and violence.

For all who lack a safe place to rest their heads,

For all without a home,

For all who live with daily insecurity.

We pray that they will find peace and love.

May we be blessed

With compassion for those

Still weary, still seeking, still with far to go.

Help us to open our hearts to refugees wherever they may be.

## Reading

Pope Francis recently said:

“Faced with the tragedy of tens of thousands of refugees who are fleeing death by war and by hunger, and who are on a path toward a hope for life, the Gospel calls us to be neighbours to the smallest and most abandoned, to give them concrete hope.”

He went on to say:

“May every parish, every religious community, every monastery, every sanctuary of Europe, take in one family.”

He explained that for Catholics, offering shelter to a refugee family would be seen as a “concrete act of preparation” for the Jubilee Year of Mercy beginning in December.

## Hymn: **When I needed a neighbour - All**

1 When I needed a neighbour were you there, were you there?

When I needed a neighbour were you there?

*And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter,*

*Were you there?*

2 I was hungry and thirsty, were you there, were you there?

I was hungry and thirsty, were you there?

*Chorus*

3 I was cold, I was naked, were you there, were you there?

I was cold, I was naked, were you there?

*Chorus*

4 When I needed a shelter were you there, were you there?

When I needed a shelter were you there?

*Chorus*

5 When I needed a healer were you there, were you there?

When I needed a healer were you there?

*Chorus*

6 Wherever you travel I'll be there, I'll be there,

Wherever you travel I'll be there.

*And the creed and the colour and the name won't matter,*

*I'll be there.*

*Sydney Carter (1915-2004)*

This text is sung to the tune NEIGHBOUR by Sydney Carter.

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**Reading:** Matthew 25: 35-40

'For I was hungry, and you gave me food, thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you brought me home, naked and you clothed me, sick and you cared for me, a prisoner and you came to me.....I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to the least of my brothers you did it to me.'

## **Prayer to Jesus, the immigrant - All**

Jesus, as an immigrant you fled to Egypt with your mother Mary and Joseph your father. You were a vulnerable family in a foreign land, looking for shelter and sustenance. Help us to welcome those like you who cross our borders looking for a home. Give us hearts of compassion, a humane response, and laws that respect the dignity of all immigrants.

Amen

## **Intercessional prayers**

For an end to the violence and poverty that displaces so many people from their homes and homelands, we pray to the Lord.

*Lord hear us*

**All Lord graciously hear us**

For the leaders of all countries, that they may implement policies that are compassionate and allow for safe migration.

*Lord hear us*

**All Lord graciously hear us**

For all who are overwhelmed by loneliness, poverty, and despair, that they may be comforted through our help and kindness.

*Lord hear us*

**All Lord graciously hear us**

For migrants, refugees and strangers in our midst, that they may find hope in our concern for justice and feel the warmth of our love.

*Lord hear us*

**All Lord graciously hear us**

For all who pray together today, that we may come to greater understanding and acceptance of difference.

*Lord hear us*

**All Lord graciously hear us**

**Reading:** John 1:19-21

‘Anyone who says ‘I love God’ and hates his brother is a liar, since a man who does not love the brother that he can see cannot love God, whom he has never seen. So this is the commandment that he has given to us, that anyone who loves God must also love his brother.’

**Hymn: For the healing of the nations - All**

- 1 For the healing of the nations,  
Lord, we pray with one accord,  
for a just and equal sharing  
of the things that earth affords.  
To a life of love in action  
help us rise and pledge our word.

- 2 Lead us forward into freedom,  
from despair your world release,  
that, redeemed from war and hatred,  
all may come and go in peace.  
Show us how through care and goodness  
fear will die and hope increase.
  
- 3 All that kills abundant living,  
let it from the earth be banned:  
pride of status, race or schooling,  
dogmas that obscure your plan.  
In our common quest for justice  
may we hallow life's brief span.
  
- 4 You, Creator-God, have written  
your great name on humankind;  
for our growing in your likeness  
bring the life of Christ to mind;  
that by our response and service  
earth its destiny may find.

*Fred Kaan (1929-2009)*

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## **Reading:** Philippians 2: 5-8

'In your minds you must be the same as Christ Jesus: His state was divine yet he did not cling to His equality with God but emptied Himself to assume the condition of a slave, and became as men are, he was humbler yet, even to accepting death on the cross.'

## **Hymn: Make me a channel of your peace - All**

- 1    Make me a channel of your peace.  
      Where there is hatred, let me bring your love.  
      Where there is injury pardon, Lord.  
      And where there's doubt true faith in you.
  
- 2    Make me a channel of your peace.  
      Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope  
      Where there is darkness only light  
      And where there's sadness ever joy.
  
- 3    Oh Master, grant that I may never seek  
      So much to be consoled as to console.  
      To be understood as to understand  
      To be loved, as to love with all my soul.
  
- 4    Make me a channel of your peace.  
      Where there is hatred, let me bring your love.  
      Where there is injury pardon, Lord.  
      And where there's doubt true faith in you.

**Acknowledgements: Sebastian Temple, OCP Publications  
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## **Closing prayer - All**

*Almighty and merciful God,  
Whose son became a refugee  
And had no place to call his own;*

*Look with mercy on those who today  
Are fleeing from danger;  
Homeless and hungry.*

*Bless those who work to bring them relief;  
Inspire generosity and compassion in all our hearts;  
And guide the nations of Europe towards that day  
When all will rejoice in your kingdom of justice and peace.*

*We make our prayer through Christ our Lord,  
Amen*

*(Prayer written by Rt Rev Trevor Willmott, Bishop of Dover)*

Any contributions may be sent to the St Vincent de Paul Society and will be used by the SVP to assist refugees both within and outside the UK.

(Cheques should be made payable to the SVP)