

THE MIGRANT and REFUGEE CRISIS

Part 1 of 6



“Travelling Lightly & Living Our Lives in Love”

Lent is a time of preparation and introspection. It is a moment to draw closer to God through prayer, fasting, and giving. For 40 days and 40 nights, we walk together.

As we begin our journey toward Easter and prepare our hearts to celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus, the St. Andrew’s-Wesley Refugee Support Team invites you to share and support the journey of our refugee sisters and brothers, some 68.5 million forced migrants who have had to flee their homes. We invite you to join us in praying for them, that we may learn to walk together in solidarity, united in the conviction that we are one global human family.

The UN estimates that in 2017 the total number of international migrants was close to 258 million or 3.4% of the global population. Refugees and asylum seekers constitute roughly 10% of all international migrants with one in every 300 persons (0.3 % of the global population) worldwide identified as a refugee. The Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its Protocol defines a refugee as a person who:

“owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion,” is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin.

Few things have shaped the Canadian identity as decisively as migration and immigration. Our country is, as Walt Whitman once described, a “teeming nation of nations” — a place defined as much by our differences as our similarities yet brought together by the shared belief in the possibility of a better life.

Throughout our history, our country has benefited greatly from the continuous arrival of new people. Their influence is seen in our vibrant, multi-ethnic society. Yet we live in a time when the issue of immigration has emerged to become a sharply divisive issue politically. Skepticism about whether new arrivals will successfully integrate into the fabric of our nation remains an ongoing theme in the public debate on immigration policy.

It's important to remember that the refugee crisis isn't new. Through Canada's history, prior generations have voiced similar concerns that new waves of immigrants would make Canada less Canadian. Now is the time to explore historical, factual information to bring light to the history of immigration in this country, and to remind ourselves of the real human beings whose lives are taking place in the center of the debate.

Canada's immigration history is filled with stories of people who have overcome economic, religious, racial and social obstacles to succeed and thrive. Our national identity has been shaped by the fresh energy and optimism, and the new ideas and ambitions that each successive generation of immigrants has brought. Their story is our story — and Canada's story. We are reminded of this by Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle of Caritas Internationalis who is quoted as saying ... ***"We are all migrants in this world; we are all just passing through."***

As we travel through this season of LENT, we are invited to practice "travelling lightly" and consider what we can "let go and release" in order to travel lightly. Will we walk the road ahead with our migrant and refugee brothers and sisters in anticipation of a new beginning, one in which we can focus on living our lives more fully in love?

Please look forward to receiving more refugee information, education and advocacy in our series of six Lenten notices.

Thank you for considering supporting the work of our ministry through your Lenten givings.



St. Andrew's-Wesley Refugee