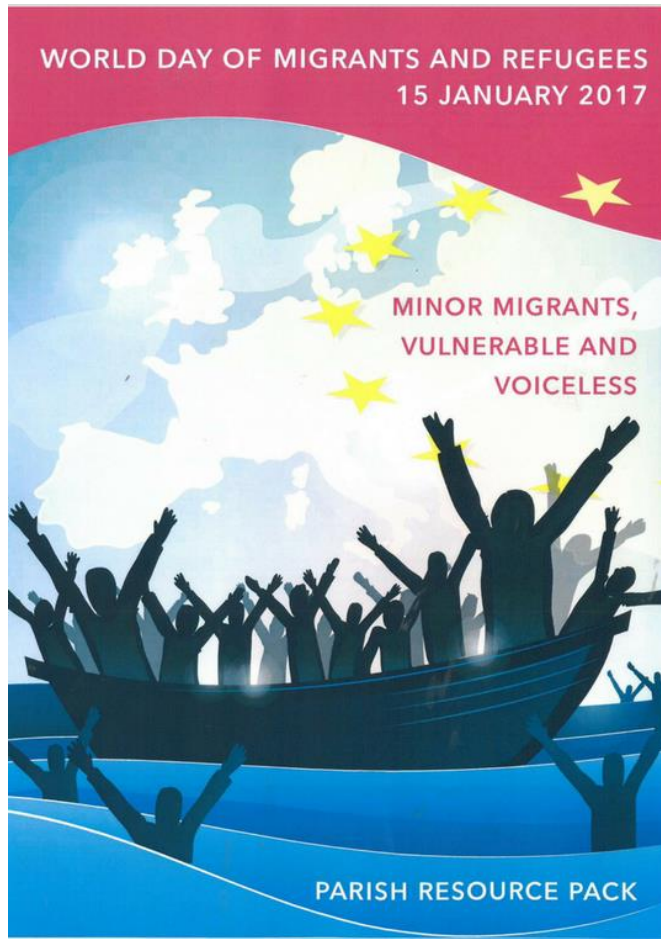


Parish Resource Pack for World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2017



"I ask everyone to help those who, for various reasons, are forced to live far from their homeland and are separated from their families."
- Pope Francis

Download the 2017 Parish Resource Pack from www.catholicbishops.ie

The Council for Immigrants of the Irish Bishops' Conference has released a parish resource pack to celebrate the World Day for Migrants and Refugees on Sunday 15 January 2017. The pack contains the following useful resources to be used on Sunday and throughout the year:

- Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the 103 World Day of Migrants and Refugees
 - *The Plight of Unaccompanied Refugees in Europe* – Nasir's Story
 - European Union Unaccompanied Minors Statistics
 - Prayers of the Faithful
 - Suggested Homily Notes
 - Parish actions remembering child migrants on the World Day of Migrants and Refugees
- Parishes are at the centre of welcoming the stranger in our midst, particularly the vulnerable and those in need who are on the periphery of our communities. As Pope Francis stated in his message for World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2016: "Faced with the tragedy of tens of thousands refugees fleeing death on account of war and hunger and who are traveling toward a hope for life, the Gospel calls us to be

'neighbours' to the smallest and abandoned, (and) to give them a concrete hope," He continued it is not enough just to say "courage, patience!" because hope "is combative, with the tenacity of those who go toward a safe destination. I make an appeal to the parishes, to religious communities, to monasteries, and sanctuaries of all Europe to express the concreteness of the Gospel, and to welcome a family of refugees."

In this year's message Pope Francis builds on this theme of welcome for migrants and refugees and focuses on '*Child Migrants, the Vulnerable and the Voiceless*'. Pope Francis says, "I feel compelled to draw attention to the reality of child migrants, especially the ones who are alone. In doing so I ask everyone to take care of the young, who in a threefold way are defenceless: they are children, they are foreigners, and they have no means to protect themselves. I ask everyone to help those who, for various reasons, are forced to live far from their homeland and are separated from their families."

Pope Francis goes on to say, "Childhood, given its fragile nature, has unique and inalienable needs. Above all else, there is the right to a healthy and secure family environment, where a child can grow under the guidance and example of a father and a mother; then there is the right and duty to receive adequate education, primarily in the family and also in the school, where children can grow as persons and agents of their own future and the future of their respective countries. Indeed, in many areas of the world, reading, writing and the most basic arithmetic is still the privilege of only a few. All children, furthermore, have the right to recreation; in a word, they have the right to be children."

"And yet among migrants, children constitute the most vulnerable group, because as they face the life ahead of them, they are invisible and voiceless: their precarious situation deprives them of documentation, hiding them from the world's eyes; the absence of adults to accompany them prevents their voices from being raised and heard. In this way, migrant children easily end up at the lowest levels of human degradation, where illegality and violence destroy the future of too many innocents, while the network of child abuse is difficult to break up."

Pope Francis challenges us all "to work towards protection, integration and long-term solutions."

Resources

Click [here](#) to download the **World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2017 Parish Resource Pack** for 2017.

Click [here](#) to download the text of the Pope's message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees

A selection of prayers for migrants and refugees can be found below:

Prayers

Prayer for Unaccompanied Migrant Children

Mary, you traveled alone
To reach the loving embrace
Of your beloved family member.
Elizabeth welcomed you with
Open arms and an open heart.

Be with those children
Who are traveling across borders
To seek solace with family.
Protect them from exploitation
And from traumatizing experiences.

Teach us by
The example of the Visitation.
Grant us open arms
And open hearts
To receive your children
Trying to find the way
To a new, life-giving home.

Mary, Mother of the human family,
Help us end the misery
Of children separated from family
By man-made borders
But not by love.
May they arrive, as you did,
To joy and to the benediction
Of a loving embrace.

Amen.

Prayer by the Sisters of Mercy

Prayer for Migrants and Refugees

Mary Most Holy, you, together with St. Joseph and the Child Jesus, experienced the suffering of exile.
You were forced to flee to Egypt to escape the persecution of Herod.
Today we entrust the men, women and children who live as migrants and refugees to your maternal protection.
Grant us the grace to welcome them with Christian hospitality, so that these brothers and sisters of ours may find acceptance and understanding on their journey.

Teach us to recognise your Son
in the migrant who labours to bring food to our tables
in the refugee seeking protection from persecution, war and famine
in the man, woman and child who are victims of human trafficking
in the asylum seeker imprisoned for fleeing without documents

May all those who are far from their place of birth find in the Church a home where no one is a stranger.

We ask this in the name of your blessed Son, Jesus, our Lord, Amen.

Prayer for Refugees

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.

The Work of the Council for Immigrants

For more information on the work of the Council for Immigrants please click [here](#).