

“A Place to Call Home”

World Refugee Day: June 20, 2009

Opening Prayer

Voices from Exile

Scripture Reflection and Litany

God of Goodness hear our prayer:
Give them a place to call home.

Signs of Hope

We rejoice and give thanks to God.



Reflection from Catholic Social Teaching

Prayer for Places to Call Home:

We pray for roofs that safely shelter refugees.
We pray for walls that offer security for refugees.
We pray for rooms in which the dignity of refugees can flourish.
We pray for the beauty of nature to restore the broken hearts of refugees.
We pray for communities that celebrate the presence and gifts of refugees.
Hear our prayers, Joseph, Mary and Jesus.
Help us see you in all those who have had to flee their lands, and grant all refugees the grace and support to rebuild their homes and their lives.
Amen.



Notes for using this prayer:

June is the month we have chosen to lift up the realities of refugees in our world. June 20th has been designated the "official" World Day of Prayer for Refugees. The prayer service here is, with only a couple of modifications, the prayer service done by www.EducationforJustice.org for this occasion. You may decide to incorporate music into the prayer. You may also choose to have students research, make and present appropriate symbols of "home" for each of the different groups named in the prayer service.

For this prayer you will need:

- √ To choose a Prayer Leader and readers for the prayer
- √ To decide if you want to add music to this outline
- √ Copies of the readings below for the readers.
- √ Copies of the prayer guide (first page of this file) for those participating, or ability to project it so it can be read by those participating.

Opening Prayer: (Prayer Leader reads the following)

We remember the journey of the Holy Family, who became refugees in Egypt before returning home. We recognize the similar refugee journeys of millions of families in the world today. We pray that the theme of the United Nations World Refugee Day for 2004, "A Place To Call Home," becomes a reality for these families.

May refugees rebuild their lives in safety and dignity. Where ever possible, may they return to the homes and communities they have left. When they cannot return home because of war, poverty, persecution, may they be welcomed and allowed new lives in new lands. Good and loving God, end their homelessness and bring them to safe harbor. Amen.

Voices from Exile: (A reader reads the following:)

We weep beside the rivers
And we long for an end to our exile.
We weep and our tears mingle in the waters
That flow by us but do not take us home.
Our children have no roots to nourish them.
Our elders have been lost to us.
The land we cherished is gone.
How long will we wander,
How long will we yearn to return
How long will we weep beside the rivers of exile?

(continued on the next page)

Scripture Reflection & Litany (A reader reads the introduction and leads the gathered community in praying the litany that follows:)

As the travelers to Emmaus walked, "Jesus himself came up and walked beside them, but they did not recognize him." The travelers invited Jesus to stay with them, and

"while He was with them at the table, he took the bread and blessed it; then He broke it and handed it to them. And their eyes were open and they handed it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him . . ." (from Luke 24)

We ask forgiveness for the times we have failed to recognize Christ in the strangers on the road; we ask forgiveness for the times we have not welcomed those different from ourselves.

For the more than 4 million Palestinians who have been refugees for over half a century, we pray, **God of Goodness hear our prayer: Give them a place to call home.**

For the 2 and a half million Afghanistan refugees, we pray:

For the 580,000 refugees from Burundi, we pray:

For the 505,000 refugees from the Sudan, we pray:

For the 433,000 refugees from Angola, we pray:

For the 429,000 refugees from Somalia, we pray:

For the 415,000 refugees from the Congo, we pray:

For the 400,000 refugees from Iraq, we pray:

For the 372,000 refugees from Bosnia, we pray:

For the 348,000 refugees from Vietnam, we pray:

For the 316,000 refugees from Eritrea, we pray:

For the hundreds of thousands of other refugees from countries around the world, we pray:

Signs of Hope (A reader reads the following section from Isaiah and continues the litany—the response is on the prayer aid.)

"I will make a highway across the mountains and prepare a road for my people to travel . . . Sing, heavens! Shout for joy, earth! The Lord will comfort his people . . . Look around you and see what is happening! Your people are assembling, they are coming home." (Isaiah 49:11-13, 18)

For Now Tev Soeun, who has come home to Cambodia after years as a refugee:
We rejoice and give thanks to God.

For Simon Akatari, who is beginning to rebuild his life in Mozambique after living in a refugee camp in Zimbabwe, *We rejoice and give thanks to God.*

For Jasenko Selimovic, who has found a new home in Sweden after fleeing Bosnia during the war, *We rejoice and give thanks to God.*

For Alfredo Chivunda, who was born in a refugee camp in Zambia, and has returned 14 years later to Angola, *We rejoice and give thanks to God.*

For William Kolong Pioth, who was one of the thousands of lost boys in the Sudan, who has received an education and a new home in Canada, *We rejoice and give thanks to God.*

For Esperanza Kabiba, who has returned with her family to Angola after living for years in a refugee camp in the Congo, *We rejoice and give thanks to God.*

For Nolvía Domínguez, who fled from political persecution in Chile and now has a family, home, and welcoming community in Norway, *We rejoice and give thanks to God.*

For Dr. Joseph Nsengiyumva, who has returned to his home in Rwanda to practice medicine after being a refugee, *We rejoice and give thanks to God.*

For the refugees in our local community, in our state, and in our country who have been welcomed as we welcome Christ, *We rejoice and give thanks to God.*

Reflection from Catholic Social Teaching (The Prayer Leader reads the following.)

“We call on all who follow Christ not to turn away from those who are the strangers on the road, but to see them as our brothers and sisters, and to support efforts to help them return to their homes, and where this is not possible, to welcome them without fear and aid them in creating new homes.”

Pontifical Council, “Cor Unum,” 1998

Prayer for Places to Call Home (The Prayer Leader invites those gathered to join in the closing prayer that is found on the prayer aid.)

We pray for roofs that safely shelter refugees.

We pray for walls that offer security for refugees.

We pray for rooms in which the dignity of refugees can flourish.

We pray for the beauty of nature to restore the broken hearts of refugees.

We pray for communities that celebrate the presence and gifts of refugees.

Hear our prayers, Joseph, Mary and Jesus.

Help us see you in all those who have had to flee their lands, and grant all refugees the grace and support to rebuild their homes and their lives.

Amen.