

Call to action on refugee crisis

Catholics in England and Wales are urged to respond to the refugee crisis with both prayer and practical action in a statement from the Bishops' Conference.



***Whatever you did for one of these
least brothers of mine, you did for
me (Mt 25:40)'***

At last Sunday's Angelus, 6th September, Pope Francis invited every parish, religious house and monastery in Europe to respond to the growing refugee crisis by offering a place of sanctuary to families fleeing from war and persecution in their home countries. The Pope calls on our generosity and solidarity to recognise and act upon our common humanity.

The UK government has agreed to receive and resettle up to 20,000 Syrian refugees from the camps in neighbouring countries over the next five years. The Catholic Church in England and Wales will work alongside Government and local authorities to offer welcome and support to those in need.

The refugee crisis is a huge challenge, not only in Europe and the Middle East, but in many others parts of the world where large numbers of refugees live deeply uncertain and perilous lives. Consequently, as a Catholic community, and as a country, we need to be committed to helping refugees over a long period. To sustain that effort we need moral imagination.

We recognise that we can all contribute and play a part in helping to support the most vulnerable of refugees.

Such assistance includes:

- Prayer
- Financial support
- Time and professional skills (e.g. language teaching, legal help, advocacy)
- Shelter and accommodation

We can all be attentive to those who are vulnerable and newly arrived in our local communities and parishes. A warm welcome can be the most simple yet effective of gifts we can all offer.

Practically, we are working to ensure, as far as possible, that every diocese has a contact nominated to co-ordinate your parish/individual response; they will liaise with the local authority and other faith groups to match offers of time, talents and accommodation with the pressing humanitarian needs of the local area. Additional information will be regularly updated in our web section for the refugee crisis:

catholicnews.org.uk/refugee-crisis

Cardinal Vincent Nichols (President)

Archbishop Peter Smith (Vice-President)