

Statement on the Refugee Crisis

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

At last Sunday's Angelus, 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 (eg language teaching, legal help)
- 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. Please look at www.catholicnews.org.uk for additional information which will be regularly updated.

Prayer from Pope Saint John Paul II

Hear my voice, for it is the voice of the victims of all wars and violence among individuals and nations.

Hear my voice, for it is the voice of all children who suffer and will suffer when people put their faith in weapons and war.

Hear my voice when I beg You to install into the hearts of all human beings the wisdom of peace, the strength of justice, and the joy of fellowship.

Hear my voice, for I speak for the multitudes in every country and in every period of history who do not want war and are ready to walk the road of peace.

Hear my voice and grant insight and strength so that we may always respond to hatred with love, to injustice with total dedication to justice, to need with the sharing of self, to war with peace.

O God, hear my voice and grant unto the world Your everlasting peace.

Amen.

Handwritten signature of Cardinal Vincent Nichols, featuring a cross symbol followed by the name 'Vincent' in a cursive script.

✠ Cardinal Vincent Nichols
President

Handwritten signature of Archbishop Peter Smith, featuring a cross symbol followed by the name 'Peter' in a cursive script.

✠ Archbishop Peter Smith
Vice-President

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For more information and further guidance – www.catholicnews.org.uk

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