

## *World Day of Migrants and Refugees*

**Sunday, January 17, 2016**

As we move into a new year, it is not too early to remind ourselves about the world day of prayer for migrants and refugees. The Ordo (Liturgical Calendar of the Catholic Church) states the following:

“A World Day of Migrants and Refugees is observed in many places in solidarity with the World Refugee Day promoted by the United Nations and observed since 2001 on 20 June. This January observance was instituted by Saint Pius X in 1914.”

“The phenomenon of migration today is a providential opportunity for the proclamation of the Gospel in the contemporary world.” (Pope Benedict XV1, 2012)

The theme of the World Day of Migrants and Refugees is “Migrants and Refugees Challenge Us: The Response of the Gospel of Mercy”.

**What is happening in your community?** You might like to find out. In Canada, the Catholic Refugee Sponsors’ Council has provided some information: (Shared on December 21, 2015, Parish Briefings; Diocese of London, Ontario, Canada)

Pope Francis, in his Message, refers to “Challenge” and “Mercy”. We are now in the Jubilee Year of Mercy. Challenge – this is a difficult process. Mercy – we are changed and so is the refugee. Pope Francis says, “In the face of the refugee we see the face of Christ”. The change is inevitable and there is no turning back.

Canada is blessed to have thousands of committed, faithful, and well-trained people who have come forward to sponsor and support refugees. The Church gives thanks to God for these wonderful people. They are performing the corporal works of mercy – feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless...Pope Francis has identified these as concrete actions during the Jubilee Year of Mercy. As a reminder that these are part of living our faith, there is an indulgence for these works of mercy.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph experienced migration as well, when the Holy Family fled to Egypt to escape persecution by King Herod.

Refugees are not just political “concepts” but real people who have experienced violence, persecution, environmental disaster, and other hardships.

The recent Pastoral Letter by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) on welcoming refugees calls the faithful to action – to talk with government, to provide formation for clergy and pastoral workers; to set up local diocesan services, to establish a ministry for migrants, and more.

