

MIGRANTS & REFUGEES



January 14, 2018 has been set aside by Pope Francis as the “World day of Migrants & Refugees.”

Leviticus 19:34 says “You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God.”

Indeed, if we go back far enough, were we not all “strangers” once!? Blessed Trinity parish has a long open history of welcoming the “strangers.” That includes all migrants and also refugees that we were allowed to welcome and settle here.

One great chapter in my life as a priest has been a visit to Eglin AFB in 1975 where there were over 30,000 Vietnamese refugees. The four people with me, on the spot, signed up to take a “family” of 22 people. There were no meetings. It was the obvious and right thing to do. The parish I was in at the time got behind the resettling of refugees – getting homes, finding jobs, teaching English, buying used cars, etc. Before too long 140 Vietnamese and Laotian refugees were settled. All did well and contributed much to our country.



Arrival of South Vietnamese refugees, Eglin AFB 1975

Here at Blessed Trinity we settled two families from Kosovo until they were independent enough to move nearer to people from their own country in Orlando. Blessed Trinity has welcomed and helped individuals and families running from desperate problems in a South American country, African countries, Haiti, Central America, etc. If the opportunity presented itself we would extend a big welcome to refugees from war torn countries in Asia.



I was a stranger
and you welcomed me

(Matthew 25:35)

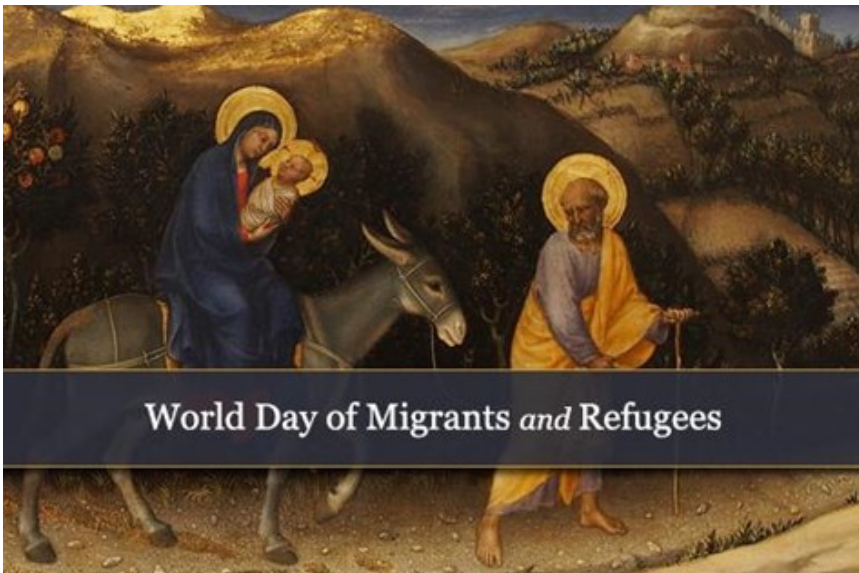
The bible and catholic teaching is clear about how we are to deal with aliens, widows, orphans, refugees, migrants.



Every stranger who knocks on our door is an opportunity for an encounter with Jesus Christ who identifies with and welcomes the rejected strangers of every age and race (Matthew 25:35-43). The Lord entrusts to the church's motherly love every person forced to leave their homeland in search of a better life.

Worldwide, to comply with the welcoming word of the creator God, there is a pressing need for a concrete commitment to “increase and simplify the process for granting humanitarian visas and for reunifying families” (Pope Francis). The hope is that a greater number of countries, including the US, will adopt private and community sponsorship programs. Vulnerable refugees need a humanitarian corridor to a safe and better life. Pope Benedict said “For the sake of the fundamental dignity of every human person, we must strive to find

alternative solutions to detention for those who enter a country without authorization.”



World Day of Migrants and Refugees

At the United Nations summit in New York on September 29, 2016 world leaders clearly expressed their desire to take decisive action in support of migrants and refugees to save their lives and protect their rights – this to be done on a global level.

The Holy family were once refugees. We ask Mary, our spiritual mother to guide and inspire us to love and care for the stranger, the migrant, the refugee as ourselves.