



22 September 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

**Journeying together in prayer, action and advocacy:  
A Report on the Refugee Ministry and Migrant Worker Ministry in the Diocese of London**

The theme chosen by Pope Francis for the 106<sup>th</sup> World Day of Migrants and Refugees is “**Forced like Jesus Christ to flee**”. To mark this day, which occurs this year on 27 September, I would like to highlight the excellent work that is being done in our Diocese by our Refugee Ministry and Migrant Worker Ministry offices.

Over the years, our Diocese has reached out to the women, men and families who come to live and labour among us. Our people, parish communities, Outreach Ministry offices and a great number of volunteers have sought ways to welcome, protect, promote and integrate our new neighbours and new parishioners. In return, we have been exposed to new cultures, new foods, new languages and new stories. Not only have we come to know our neighbour (Lk 10: 29), but we have discovered how our lives are interconnected; that we are all brothers and sisters in Christ.

We have learned through their stories that they have come to our country because they were forced, like Jesus, to flee, to find safety for themselves and their loved ones (Mt 2:13). Their lives were turned upside down because of war or political unrest or poverty or environmental degradation, and they had to seek a new home. Some had to leave their country to earn a living, so that they could send support back home to their families. Their stories, in fact, echo the stories of our ancestors who came to Canada in search of a new way of life, a way to support their loved ones.

I want to express my thanks to you, the people of our Diocese, who are giving of yourselves to welcome and accompany your new neighbour. I also want to acknowledge the exemplary service of the Outreach Ministries of our Diocese – our *Oversees and Inland Protection Offices and Migrant Workers Ministry/Ministerio de Trabajadores Migrantes Office*. Those serving in these offices, along with many generous volunteers, are reaching out to those, who like Jesus, flee from their homeland and come to find a new home in our Diocese.

Attached to this letter, you will find a one-page document with practical suggestions on how we can welcome, protect, promote and integrate migrants and refugees. Also attached is *Journeying together in prayer, action and advocacy: A Report on the Refugee Ministry and Migrant Worker Ministry in the Diocese of London*. I encourage you to read this report. It allows us to hear the personal stories of our neighbours and provides a snapshot into how you, our parishes, together with our Outreach Ministries, are accompanying those who are coming to our Diocese. Join us in discerning how we can be in solidarity with them.

May our words, actions and attitudes be of the mind of Christ, the Good Samaritan, who in his great mercy came to care for and liberate all of us.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Ronald Fabbro, C.S.B.  
Bishop of London



**These men and women who come to labour and live among us are our neighbours and our parishioners. Let us, in the spirit promoted by Pope Francis<sup>1</sup>, seek ways to *welcome, protect, promote and integrate* them.**

Welcome	Protect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Find ways to reach out to them</li> <li>- Be hospitable</li> <li>- Ensure that their basic needs are met and that they have adequate and dignified initial accommodation</li> <li>- Invite them to parish events (virtual parish events)</li> <li>- Listen to their voices</li> <li>- Be receptive of their gifts</li> <li>- Support efforts that offer broader options for migrants and refugees to enter destination countries safely and legally</li> <li>- Support private and community sponsorship programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Defend the rights and dignity of each person who migrates or seeks refuge independent of their legal status</li> <li>- Address stereotypical and prejudicial comments that you hear</li> <li>- Pray for them and for all who seek a safe home</li> <li>- Ensure that they are treated well in the wider community</li> </ul>
Promote	Integrate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Assist them with proper documentation and paperwork that would allow them to access financial assistance, healthcare, transportation, educational opportunities and language instruction</li> <li>- Encourage them to practise their religion</li> <li>- Assist them to find ways to celebrate their cultural identity</li> <li>- Recognize their skills, knowledge and abilities and help them find employment</li> <li>- Advocate for immigration and refugee policies that promote family reunification and express a preferential option for those most in need</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Empower them to achieve their potential as human beings, in all the dimensions: <i>The glory of God is the human person fully alive</i></li> <li>- Recognize their giftedness and the contributions they can make.</li> <li>- Remember 'integration' is not assimilation that leads to the suppression of their cultural identity</li> <li>- Invite them to participate in the political, economic, social aspects of the community</li> <li>- Welcome their gifts in our faith community</li> </ul>

**Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me' (Mt 25: 37-40).**

<sup>1</sup> To mark the annual *World Day of Migrants and Refugees*, Pope Francis has in recent years developed the theme of welcoming, promoting, protecting and integrating those who seek to live and work among us. Many of the ideas above come from his messages from 2018 to 2020.