

Pastoral Letter 61 16.6.21

Dear Friends

It's Refugee Week, a few days space to think and pray about refugees and migrants who have had to leave their homes, livelihoods and countries. During the pandemic, home is a place we have become accustomed to. But for many, home is something longed for, out of reach.

This year even the temporary homes which offered some sort of refuge to refugees have been under threat. In March some of the flimsy structures made of plastic sheeting and bamboo that have served as temporary homes for Rohingya refugees in the vast camp of Cox's Bazaar in Bangladesh, burnt down. The devastating fire made 45,000 people homeless and left 429 people unaccounted for. All We Can is funding support for the rebuilding of stronger homes for some of the refugees affected.

Also this year, 4,500 migrants have made the risky Channel crossing to the UK, double the number of last year – and we're only in June! Shockingly this number included at least 250 unaccompanied children, some as young as 12.

The parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10.25-37) tells of a traveller on a journey from Jerusalem to Jericho who was attacked by robbers and left injured on the roadside. Two people who might have been expected to help him, a priest and a Levite, passed him by. The one who did care for him was a Samaritan, the least likely person to stop and help, Samaritans being a traditional enemy of the Jews.

Jesus told this story in answer to a lawyer's question "who is my neighbour?". The lawyer had to adjust his thinking to admit to Jesus that the good neighbour was the Samaritan.

Refugee Week invites us to reflect on the dangerous journeys undertaken by migrants and refugees in their search for a new home and a better life. The parable is a challenge to us to ask ourselves how can we be good neighbours to refugees living in our communities as well as the millions of displaced people across the world?

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