

Parish of St. John Vianney: **LiveSimply reflection and action.**

JANUARY 2024: Living in Solidarity with the Poor

Our LiveSimply Prayer. Heavenly Father, we praise and thank you for the world You created for us to share. We ask you to give us the grace to work together, to live more simply, more sustainably, and in solidarity with the poor.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen

Pope Francis has written in Fratelli Tutti:

No one will openly deny that these people are human beings, yet in practice, by our decisions and the way we treat them, we may show that we consider them less worthy. For Christians, this way of thinking is totally unacceptable (Para 39).

ACTION FOR JANUARY: we invite you to become more aware of the needs of refugees and destitute asylum seekers and the local support available for them.

Reflection by Fr. Yemane

As a migrant and refugee living in the U.K, those who are displaced and currently on the move are close to my heart. These labels challenge my identity and human formation in my vocation to priesthood. **The loss of family, home and language creates a sense of un-belonging and displacement.** I did not



experience Christian love in the way that Jesus taught when he reminded us that whatever we did to the least of our brethren, we did it to Him. In 2013, when I left home secretly and reached Sudan safely, **I gave Mum a call and I remember how she felt.** I can still feel the sorrow she went through and my own sadness. The agony of refugee families who are dispersed recalls Mary and Joseph frantically calling for Jesus when he was separated from them. When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.” The migrant also suffers the sense of being lost and being separated from their loved ones. **To understand their suffering, we must see those who are displaced and on the move through the eyes of the poor and try to help with supportive and welcoming action.** Pope Francis reasons that all of us experience exclusion or disorientation at some point in our lives. He suggests that our goal is not to amass information or satisfy curiosity, but rather to become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering and thus to discover what each of us can do about it.

Thank you to Fr Yemane and the sub-group supporting LiveSimply action C1. Help us achieve the [LiveSimply award](#) contact: tony.obrien@hotmail.com

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REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS IN LEEDS

Recent statistics are elusive, but Home Office figures show that in June 2022 approximately **1,300 people in Leeds were seeking asylum**, i.e. they were awaiting a decision on their request for Leave to Remain (LTR). People who have received LTR in the UK **are known as ‘refugees’**.

Who are these people described as refugees and asylum seekers?

Refugees and asylum seekers in Leeds (known as a City of Sanctuary) come from many different countries – 70 in 2021, with special arrangements for people from Hong Kong, Ukraine, and the Afghan Resettlement programme. A refugee is a person who has left their country and is **seeking protection from persecution or serious human rights violations**. Once they have received LTR, they have permission to work, the right to protection and some mainstream benefits. Asylum seekers are people who fled their country for the same reason as refugees **but have not yet received a positive response to their asylum claim** in the UK. They don't get mainstream benefits and are mostly banned from working. They may have access to housing and very basic support for a limited period of time. If an LTR application fails, **the individual's minimal funding is withdrawn, and they are destitute**.

Who supports refugees and asylum seekers?

Leeds has a long-standing commitment to supporting people seeking asylum. **ST MONICA'S HOUSING** supports 11 destitute women in two houses, in Harehills and Armley, both of which are linked to the RC Diocese of Leeds, and **WYDAN** (West Yorkshire Destitute Asylum Network) has a winter night shelter in a former Methodist church in Gipton. Other charities include PAFRAS, LASSN and Conversation Club Leeds.



HELP NEEDED!

St. Monica's Housing needs financial donations and practical help with repairs/maintenance, help with outings, and new trustees (esp. those with knowledge of immigration law, safeguarding, communications, web-design and fund-raising. If interested, please email info@stmonicashousingleeds.org.uk, indicating how you would like to help. Website: www.stmonicashousingleeds.org.uk.

WYDAN needs volunteers to help at the Night Shelter (open 7 nights a week). For more information please contact the project manager, Katrina Burton (shelter@wydan.org), or Chair of Trustees, Ted Britton, at ted@wydan.org, website: www.wydan.org.