

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

July 2024: OVERSEAS AID and MIGRATION

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*

After (the Magi) had left, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said "Get up, take the child and his mother with you and escape into Egypt and stay there until I tell you, because Herod intends to search for the child and do away with him". So Joseph got up and, taking the child and his mother with him, left that night for Egypt, where he stayed until Herod was dead. (Matthew 2:13-15)

ACTION FOR JULY: to review our attitudes to those who struggle and need our support and offer an informed, Christian response to poverty and injustice in conversations with people we meet

Reflection: Pope Francis wrote an encyclical letter during the COVID pandemic called *Fratelli tutti*, where he offers the thought that "in the hope that in the face of present-day attempts to eliminate or ignore others, we may prove capable of responding with a new vision of fraternity and social friendship that will not remain at the level of words". He invites us "Let us dream, then, as a single human family, as fellow travellers sharing the same flesh, as children of the same earth which is our common home, each of us bringing the richness of his or her beliefs and convictions, each of us with his or her own voice, brothers and sisters all". (Paragraphs 6, 8)

Action: Just as the Holy Family experienced the trauma of separation from their place of origin, cultural change and a religious uprooting, so too do many people in present times, forced to emigrate and seek asylum. Whether fleeing from persecution or economic improvement, asylum seekers and refugees are validated by Pope Francis, just as are those who remain in poverty in their home country. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Matthew 25:35).



Help us achieve the [LiveSimply award](#) contact: tony.obrien@hotmail.com

Please take this leaflet home to share with family and friends (1)

Pope Francis invites us to respond to the plight of others with actions and words. To do this, we need to be informed, to provide a Christian response when views are promoted that many people would find offensive, and to take positive action.

1. Often it is not just the refugees who are suffering but also those they leave behind. As the Holy Father says, “there is also a need to reaffirm the right not to emigrate, (and) to remain in one’s homeland”. As our new government now assumes office, consider writing to your MP, asking that the UK overseas aid budget is **restored to 0.7% of GDP** from 0.5% and that all the money is spent overseas, not supporting asylum seekers in the UK.

2. Nobody spends all their money, puts themselves in danger and crosses the world without very good reason. Referring to the “small boats”, not the people in them, risks dehumanising people with the same hopes, dreams and ambitions as the rest of us.



- Remember that **70% of the people claiming asylum in the UK in 2023 were granted refugee status, protection or other forms of leave to remain.** Could we volunteer with asylum seekers and refugees in Leeds at St Monica’s and WYDAN, or help financially?
3. CAFOD suggests that, as Catholics, we can all pray for unity and peaceful dialogue between nations and communities. CAFOD operates a **Refugee and Conflict Fund**, which helps vulnerable people fleeing conflict and poverty all over the world, in countries such as Afghanistan and South Sudan.
 4. In our choices as consumers, and as voters, we have a chance to ensure that the money flowing to communities overseas, via aid or trade, supports a just, green recovery for the poorest and most vulnerable people.
 5. You can read more about the Pope’s teachings via the CAFOD website at <https://cafod.org.uk/pray/fratelli-tutti-explained>. (2)