

Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation News

Congregation of the Sisters of Bon Secours



World Refugee Day

June, 2021
Vol. 6, Number 10



Ideally, unnecessary migration ought to be avoided; this entails creating in countries of origin the conditions needed for a dignified life and integral development. Yet until substantial progress is made in achieving this goal, we are obliged to respect the right of all individuals to find a place that meets their basic needs and those of their families, and where they can find personal fulfillment.

Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti* #129

The United Nations designates June 20 as World Refugee Day in recognition of the courage and strength of people who must flee their home country to escape conflict. First held in 2001, World Refugee Day is an occasion to build empathy and understanding for the plight of refugees and to recognize their resilience in rebuilding their lives.

As you read and reflect on the content of this Newsletter, imagine yourself as a refugee. Put yourself in the shoes of the people you see in the photographs. As a person who is "good help to those in need" what would you say to the children behind barbed wire, the woman fleeing with her baby or the father traveling with his young son? How would you answer the "cry of the poor" who have been forced to flee their country due to violence, persecution, rape, hunger, climate change or some other unbearable hardship? What is ours to do?

Impelled by the Holy Spirit and renewed by the fire of our original call, we women of audacious hope alleviate displacement and its ill effects.

Imagine Yourself as a Refugee

What would you do?

If there was no government or law enforcement to protect you and your family?

If there are bombs dropping out of the sky into your neighborhood?

If you find family and friends are injured or dead? Or if there are armed militants roaming the streets?

Or if food was not available?

Or there are threats to kidnap your son or daughter?

How would you feel? What would you do?



Reflection and Discussion

How can Bon Secours be "good help" to refugees who are coming to your country?

What are you doing/could you do to live out the Chapter call to "alleviate displacement"?

Learn what resources or opportunities are available in your community to welcome, protect, promote and integrate refugees.

Our response to the arrival of migrating persons can be summarized by four words: welcome, protect, promote and integrate.
Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti* #129

June
JPIC Days of Remembrance

June 5
World Environment Day

June 8
World Oceans Day



June 12
World Day Against Child Labor

June 17
World Day to Combat Desertification & Drought

June 20
World Refugee Day

June 20
June Solstice

Displacement in Central America



The number of refugees and asylum-seekers from the North of Central America (NCA) has soared in the last five years.

Worsening crime and violence fueled by drug cartels and gangs accounts for much of the increase, along with fragile institutions, and increasing inequalities.

In Nicaragua, political persecution and human rights violations have been driving a new large-scale displacement.

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, and Bon Secours USA strongly welcomed President Biden's decision in May to admit up to 62,500 people to the United States this year under the refugee resettlement program.

Approximately 470,000 refugees and asylum-seekers from the North of Central America worldwide

Over 97,000 refugees and asylum-seekers in Mexico

Over 318,000 internally displaced people in Honduras and El Salvador

Over 102,000 Nicaraguans who sought international protection worldwide

(UNHCR - Government figures)

"We had our own bakery in El Salvador, until gangs arrived, and we could no longer sell bread. We were threatened out of our country."

Raul, 65, fled with his family from El Salvador to Guatemala



(Left) A family taking refuge in an improvised shelter set up under an overpass for people who lost their homes due to hurricanes Eta and Iota, in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, December, 2020. (Jose Cabezas/REUTERS)

Venezuela Situation

5.4 million refugees and migrants from Venezuela worldwide

Over 800,000 asylum-seekers from Venezuela worldwide

About 2.5 million living under other legal forms of stay in the Americas

Over 140,000 Recognized refugees from Venezuela

People continue to leave Venezuela to escape violence, insecurity and threats as well as lack of food, medicine and essential services. With over 5 million Venezuelans now living abroad, the vast majority in countries within Latin America and the Caribbean, this has become one of the largest displacement crisis in the world.

Ongoing political, human rights and socio-economic developments in Venezuela compel growing numbers of children, women and men to leave for neighboring countries including Peru. Many arrive scared, tired and in dire need of assistance.



"It took us over seven days to reach Peru. We had nothing to eat at the end. We tried to spare all for our son, but he also went over 24 hours without a bite. He is only three." Gerardo, Venezuelan father in Peru

Displacement in Democratic Republic of Congo

Fresh waves of unrest in the Democratic Republic of the Congo have displaced an estimated 5 million people between 2017 and 2019 – namely in the Kasai, Tanganyika, Ituri and Kivu regions. Hundreds of thousands more have fled to Angola, Zambia and other neighboring countries.

People are fleeing their homes at a worrying pace, as worsening violence destroys lives and livelihoods across the country.

Over 918,000 DRC refugees and asylum-seekers being hosted in African countries (as of February 2020)

5.01 million people displaced inside DRC (between Oct. 2017 and Sept. 2019)

Almost 524,000 refugees and 3,188 asylum-seekers in the DRC (as January 2020)
(UNHCR - Government figures)



Passing the Baton of Leadership...

Thank you, Sr. Anne Marie Mack for the passion and leadership you have given for so many years as Chair of the International JPIC Committee! We are so grateful that you will continue to serve on our Committee with a well-deserved rest from your role as Chair. The CT has appointed **Sr. Mary Beth Hamm** to serve as Chair and **Sr. Maria Pintado Peña** to serve as Co-Chair of the International JPIC Committee each for a three-year term effective immediately.

International JPIC Committee

Sr. Teresa Margot Benites Montero, CBS
Eileen Fernandini, Associate
Camille Grippon (France Liaison)
Sr. Mary Beth Hamm, SSJ - Chair
Sr. Mary Leamy, CBS
Sr. Anne Marie Mack, CBS
Rachel Moccia, Bon Secours Young Adult
Sr. Maria Pintado Peña, CBS - Co-chair
Sr. Katherine Tierney, CBS
Sr. Yolanda Morales Valiente, CBS
Sr. Chris Webb, CBS