

Short presentation script

This is the stand-alone presentation which is the main feature of Plan 1 (see Introduction and instructions for leaders). It can also be used in Plans 2 and 3 as a taster session. It is a fifteen minute talk with PowerPoint slides, plus time for discussion, which can be used during an after Mass coffee morning or as a talk during another meeting e.g. women's group.

Slide 1

Introduce yourself

Good morning, thank you all for coming.
My name is...

I'm so glad you've all come along this morning to find out a little about the church's teaching on refugees and to consider what we can all do to live out our faith more fully in this area. I am interested in this issue because...



caritas archdiocese of southwark

Together with JRS UNITED KINGDOM

REFUGEE RESOURCE Parish Pack

Love the Stranger

A short exploration of Catholic teaching on refugees and migrants, and how our parish can respond.

Created by Caritas Southwark in partnership with the Jesuit Refugee Service UK

Slide 2

Introduce the presentation

We will explore this issue together for about 15 minutes and it won't be just me talking as I'd like you to discuss among yourselves a little too. Also, if anyone here has any personal experiences they would like to share with the group, please do so.

optional, adaptable paragraph:

I'm aware that many people in our parish have themselves travelled to the UK from the country where they were born, for all kinds of reasons, or have close family or friends who have – and it's really important that we listen to you and find out what your own experiences are, if you feel you'd like to share.

This presentation will include

- Reflection and prayer
- Facts about migration
- Love the Stranger – the Catholic bishops' document.
- What we could do – discussion
- About Jesuit Refugee Service UK
- Closing prayer

We will start with a reflection and prayer. We will learn some facts about refugees, and I will summarise the teaching document from the bishops of England and Wales, Love the Stranger. We will then have a chance to discuss what we might do as individuals and as a parish. I will tell you a little about the Jesuit Refugee Service, and we will finish with a prayer.



Play the audio recording of Archbishop John Wilson speaking during refugee week 2023. It is 3 minutes 30 seconds long.

www.rcsouthwark.co.uk/news-events/news/refugee-week-2023/

Remember to download this before the event so you are not relying on WiFi.

Slide 3

Reflection

Let's begin by quietly bringing ourselves into the presence of God, who created all people in his own image.

Right now in Bangladesh, there is a man making sure his home is safe for his wife and children. His home is a bamboo tent in the largest refugee camp in the world. It is always at risk of being swept away by the next flood.

Right now in Somalia, there is a family having the most painful discussion – should they send their teenage son on a long journey to Europe where he perhaps has a chance of a decent life? The climate has changed and their small farm no longer provides food for the family – perhaps their boy can get a job and send money back while they stay and try to make the farm productive again so they can feed their younger children.

Right now in Calais there is a woman wondering if she is brave enough to get on board a small boat to try to reach England where her father's cousin lives. It can't be worse than camping here, and always being moved on by the police.

Right now in London there is a woman leaving her friend's house where she has stayed the last few nights. She doesn't like to hang around in the daytime and get in her friend's way. Once – if – she gets her asylum application approved she'll try to get a job and be independent.

We bring all these people, and the millions like them before God.

We ask God to be with us this morning as we reflect on his Love for all his People and ask how we can better show this love to our sisters and brothers.

We ask the intercessions of the patron saints of migrants and of victims of human trafficking.

St Francis Xavier Cabrini, pray for us

St Josephine Bakhita, pray for us.



Slide 4

Let's hear the words of Joyce, who shared her experience with the Jesuit Refugee Service. Like so many people seeking sanctuary here, Joyce was left destitute by an asylum system that is notoriously difficult to navigate and offers little support for people who have arrived here with nothing.

Chosen reader

I sought safety in this country but then I was made homeless. In the last years I have stayed in 15 or 16 places, and I have slept on the streets.

Homelessness made me lose my self-esteem and confidence. When you don't have a place to lay your head, then you cannot think straight. People would think I had serious mental illness, but I was just losing my balance because I did not have a stable and safe place.

[continues >](#)

Meet Joyce

I sought safety in this country, but then I was made homeless. In the last years I have stayed in 15 or 16 places, and I have **slept on the streets.**

When you are on the streets, you cannot eat when or what you want, you cannot follow your medical treatment precisely, you can't shower, you can't wash your clothes or dress properly. You can just drop dead anytime when you don't have accommodation. Everyone needs somewhere to rest and feel safe.

It doesn't have to be this way.

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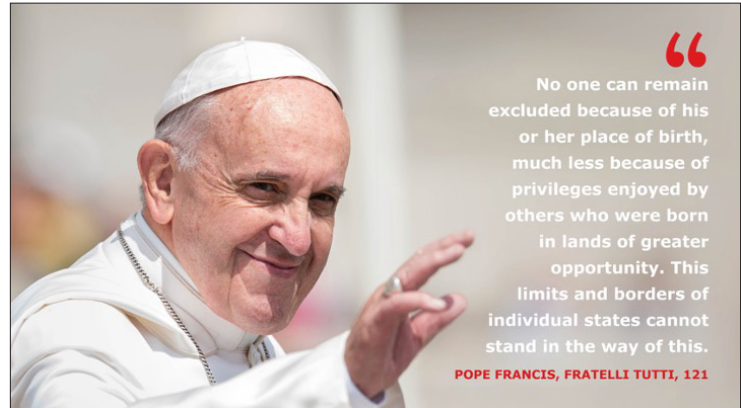
Everyone needs somewhere to rest and feel safe.

It doesn't have to be this way. The asylum system shouldn't make people homeless the way it has made me homeless. Things need to change."

Slide 5

In Fratelli Tutti, Pope Francis said:

"No one can remain excluded because of his or her place of birth, much less because of privileges enjoyed by others who were born in lands of greater opportunity. The limits and borders of individual states cannot stand in the way of this."



Slide 6

Facts about refugees

As I present a few numbers to you, please keep in mind that these represent so many people, individuals and families, who just want to live peaceful lives in places where they can be safe, to contribute to society, and thrive.

There are currently 122.6 Million Forcibly displaced people worldwide – this is in fact 1.5% of the world's population!

This includes 68.3 million who are internally displaced – haven't crossed an international border. Of those who have left their home country, 69% are hosted in neighbouring countries.

71% are hosted in low- and middle-income countries.

65% originate from just 4 countries. These countries are Syria, Venezuela, Ukraine and Afghanistan.

The countries who have taken in the most displaced people are: Iran, Turkey, Colombia, Germany and Uganda.

How many refugees are there in the world?

122.6 million forcibly displaced people worldwide

Coming from

Syria 6.3 million

Venezuela 6.2 million

Ukraine 6.1 million

Afghanistan 6.1 million

Hosted by

Iran 3.8 million

Türkiye 3.1 million

Colombia 2.8 million

Germany 2.7 million

Uganda 1.7 million

Statistics up to the middle of 2024 hence, before the situation changed in Syria. Updated figures will be here: www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/

Slide 7

In the UK

In the twelve months ending September 2024, nearly 100,000 people claimed asylum in the UK.

The top five countries of origin of people seeking asylum were Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Vietnam and Bangladesh.

57% of people claiming asylum were recognised as refugees or in need of international protection. Many people who are initially refused are eventually recognised as refugees, after going through appeals and submitting fresh claims. Some live through years of uncertainty and hardship waiting for a decision.

Meanwhile, 89,250 people were granted permission to come to the UK through schemes such as the Ukraine and Hong Kong schemes. When you hear that we need to set up more "safe routes" these are the types of schemes that are meant, as well as refugee resettlement schemes and family reunion, which are currently very limited.

Because safe routes are so limited, most refugees have no choice but to travel independently or pay traffickers to help them cross borders. The Refugee Council report that 69 people died trying to cross the channel to reach the UK in 2024.

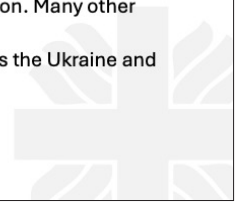
May they rest in peace...

These are figures up to September 2024. Updated figures can be found at these links:

- <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/information/refugee-asylum-facts/top-10-facts-about-refugees-and-people-seeking-asylum/>
- https://www.gov.uk/entering-staying-uk/border-control#research_and_statistics

In the UK

- Nearly 100,000 people claimed asylum in the year ending September 2024
- The top five countries of origin were Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Vietnam and Bangladesh.
- 57% of initial decisions were grants of protection. Many other people receive refugee status after appeal.
- 89,250 people came through schemes such as the Ukraine and Hong Kong schemes



Slide 8

Government support for Asylum seekers

People seeking asylum are banned from working and are provided with a £7 per day from the Government to cover the costs of their basic necessities. **Could you live on just £7 per day?**

pause for effect

£7



Once classified as refugees they lose their accommodation almost immediately, but they can then claim the same benefits as UK citizens, subject to the same limits.

Someone whose claim for asylum is refused may get nothing.

Slide 9

Love the Stranger

In 2023 The Catholic Bishops of England and Wales published a teaching document called Love the Stranger.

It is not a long document and well worth a read. It makes six main points:

1. Migration is a global issue and intricately related with issues of injustice, poverty, climate change, conflict and the arms trade, and other areas on which Catholics have spoken out for many years.
2. People have a right to the means to flourish in the place where they live – so that they are not forced to migrate. The wealthier nations have obligations to the less wealthy areas and all governments share this duty.
3. People have a right to migrate, and other countries, especially wealthier countries, have a duty to accept people who are seeking sanctuary, and provide them with their basic needs. Policies relating to migration and border control have to put human rights first.
4. People who are seeking asylum must be given the same rights as everyone else, to healthcare, education and family life. Too often asylum systems de-humanise people.
5. We must do all we can to eliminate the scourge of human trafficking and slavery.
6. We are blessed by people who come to live in our communities, seeking sanctuary. They bring all kinds of gifts and we are enriched by our encounter with them

This is the teaching of our bishops, and it is also our call to action. What will we do, as individuals and as a parish community?



Slide 10

What can we do – discussion

In his letter announcing the jubilee year Pope Francis said: "May the Christian community always be prepared to defend the rights of those who are most vulnerable, opening wide its doors to welcome them, lest anyone ever be robbed of the hope of a better future."

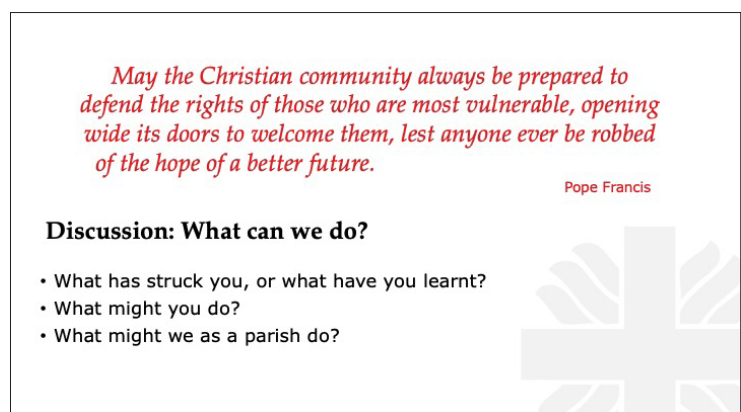
With the people you are sitting with now, chat for a few minutes about what you have heard.

What has struck you, or what have you learnt?

What might you do next?

Consider:

- How might you learn more, either about refugees or about wider global issues?
- How could you influence those among your family and friends who have a more hostile attitude



towards migration?

- Whether there is something we could do as a community – such as support refugees in a practical way or fundraise for a charity.
- Do we need to do more as a parish to celebrate the diversity among us and recognise the contributions of people from different cultures?

What we might do

Collect ideas on a flip chart. Handout 1 has some additional practical ideas that you might like to mention if people are struggling to come up with ideas

Would you be willing to be part of a team that can progress some of these ideas further?

Invite people to sign up to an email list, WhatsApp group or another way of keeping in touch, to plan activities.

Slide 11 and 12

Information about JRS UK

If you have a local charity in mind, or if a parishioner has connections with a different refugee charity, these slides can be replaced with information about them. Caritas Southwark is hoping to find some more people to host refugees in their homes under JRS UK's scheme. JRS UK has supported Caritas Southwark to produce these materials.

JRS UK is the largest dedicated Catholic refugee charity in the UK. Every year, we work with over 300 refugee friends from more than 80 different countries. Their work includes:

(change to slide 12 here)

- Hardship and practical support, providing free food and toiletries, hardship grants, and mobile phone top-ups
- Advice and casework for those experiencing destitution, connecting refugee friends to immigration advice and other specialist services
- activities such as music & drama sessions, prayer groups, and a safe space where refugee friends can come for a hot meal
- Accommodation for refugees who face homelessness. This includes their At Home hosting scheme
- Detention outreach, assisting people in detention and post-detention with access to support services
- Research and advocacy, raising awareness of policy issues that shape refugees' lives and experiences.

You can learn more about their work at www.jrsuk.net



JRS UK: Mission and Values

Shared global mission of JRS is to **accompany, serve as companions** and **advocate** with and for the rights of refugees and forcibly displaced people.

Justice
Serve
Participation
Compassion
Solidarity
Hope
Dignity
Hospitality
Advocate

Accompany



The work of JRS UK

JRS' response is integrated and holistic

Policy & Advocacy
Accommodation
Legal Team
Community Outreach
Detention Outreach
Destitution Services

Working with refugees to create communities of hospitality and welcome.



Slide 13

Final quote from a refugee

These are the words of Nicole, a refugee friend supported by JRS UK

"The respect at JRS UK is important. You lose a lot of respect and dignity when you have to turn to ask family and friends for help. When you have to rely on those closest to you to make sure you have somewhere to sleep or some money to exist. Its humbling and it's the most difficult thing ever to have to ask someone

to help you. At JRS UK, they always treat me like a person and welcome me into their community"

"Its humbling and it's the most difficult thing ever to have to ask someone to help you. At JRS UK, they always treat me like a person and welcome me into their community."

Nicole, JRS UK refugee friend



Slide 14

Let's join together in prayer

Chosen reader to lead this prayer

Abba Father, our beloved Father,
look down with mercy on us and all refugees.

Remember your son, our Lord Jesus Christ,
had to leave his homeland and flee to Egypt,
when he was a baby,
with his mother, Mary,
and foster father, Joseph.

Help us to be aware
of the fears, anxiety, pain, sorrow,
difficulties and uncertainty all refugees suffer,
and to remember that we all belong
to the same human family.

Holy Spirit,
please give us compassion and courage
to help them in any way we can.
Amen.

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Mary, Mother of God, pray for us.
St. Joseph, pray for us.

Diana Ng-Sutherland, CAFOD supporter



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