

Washing One Another's Feet

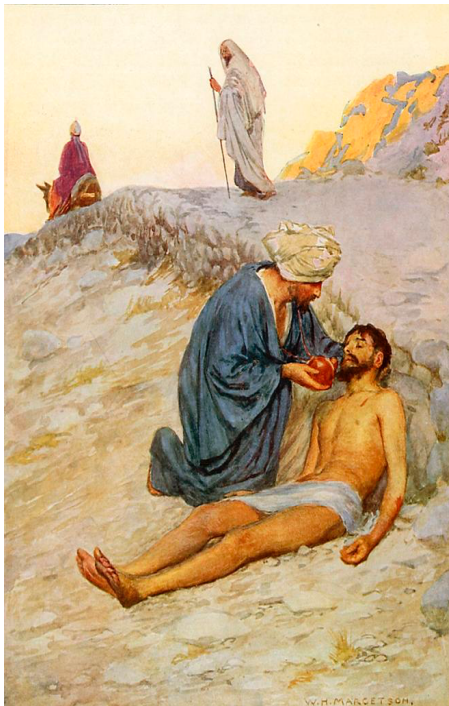
An invitation to critically reflect on JPIC

Migrants and Refugees



From the time when Moses led the Israelites from slavery in Egypt to a new home until the present time there have been people all over the world who are 'on the move' "driven by economic political forces, drawn by the hope of a better future" as the General Chapter of the Society of the Sacred Heart of 1988 described the situation. It then put forward the challenges. "As an international apostolic community, we are called to be sensitive to the hopes, sufferings of migrant people. Our charism urges us to open our hearts to them." The Chapter then underlines the importance of relationships, as love and friendship are an international language, and reciprocity, conscious of the value of each person and the enrichment that comes to us from accepting and knowing them.

Are we prepared to open our hearts and to recognise the value of each person?



Pope Francis has shown his concern for the plight of people fleeing from war and violence and draws us to the parable of the Good Samaritan. "The parable eloquently presents the basic decision we need to make in order to rebuild our wounded world. In the face of so much pain and suffering our only course is to imitate the Good Samaritan. Any other decision would make us either one of the robbers or one of those who walked by without showing compassion for the sufferings of the man on the roadside. The parable shows how a community can be rebuilt by men and women who identify with the vulnerability of others." (Fratelli Tutti)

And Bishop Long of Parramatta diocese, himself a refugee fleeing Vietnam by boat as a boy, in addressing the situation of migrants and refugees said, "we cannot always keep our borders open, but we can keep our hearts and minds open to the world."

Through mass media and social media we are bombarded with events that show us how people, countries and our common home - earth - are devalued and destroyed by various forms of violence.

Do you let yourself reflect on these disasters and are ready to support organisations that strive to confront the systems that use their power to create these situations?

Do I consider what I might be contributing to the destruction of the earth?

And how aware am I of the people who are 'on the move' at this time? from what countries?



Human trafficking is a global problem and results in refugees and migrants. It is estimated that nearly 21 million people are trafficked for profit around the world today. People are vulnerable to trafficking for a number of reasons including lack of education and employment opportunities, discrimination and social isolation and lack of protection by adults or social systems. Traffickers deceive women, men and children from all corners of the world and

force them into exploitative situations every day. Nearly every country in the world is affected by human trafficking as a point of origin, transit or destination.

Religious women of Australia and New Zealand have formed an Association ACRATH to meet the challenges human trafficking presents.

Am I ready to face the reality of human trafficking in my country, that other human beings are "resident" for the purpose of sexual exploitation, forced labour, domestic servitude, child begging, the removal of organs, forced marriage?

Am I ready to be a good Samaritan in whatever way is possible and follow the call of Pope Francis?

